DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 254 112 HE 017 808

TITLE	Renewing Excellence: The 1984 New England Legislative Survey.
INSTITUTION	New England Board of Higher Education, Wellesley, Mass.
SPONS AGENCY	Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (ED), Washington, DC.; National Conference of State Legislatures, Washington, D.C.
PUB DATE	Nov 84
NOTE	82p.; Also sponsored by the Caucus of New England State Legislatures.
AVAILABLE FROM	New England Board of Higher Education, 45 Temple Place, Boston, MA 02111 ($5.00).
PUB TYPE	Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Statistical Data (110)
EDRS PRICE	MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	*Economic Development; Educational Benefits; Educational Finance; *Educational Quality; Education Work Relationship; Geographic Regions; Government School Relationship; *Higher Education; *Legislators; Public Opinion; Regional Cooperation; *Retraining; *School Attitudes; School Business Relationship
IDENTIFIERS	*New England

ABSTRACT

Views of 705 state legislators about higher education in New England were surveyed in 1984. Five major topics in higher education were covered: quality, role in economic development, finance, communication between educators and legislators, and role in retraining mid-career workers. A large majority of the respondents felt New England colleges and universities were vital to the economic development of the region. They rated the quality of postsecondary institutions as good or excellent and favored direct aid to higher education or special incentives to industry to promote retraining programs. Overall, respondents felt strongly about the need for better communication among government, higher education, and business, and favored better information about retraining needs, retraining programs, and model legislation on retraining. Respondents were strongly disposed to regional collaboration on retraining programs. Of the 36 public colleges represented by the respondents, 27 operated one or more retraining programs, while 29 of the 65 private colleges had one or more such programs. The respondents represented Connecticut, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont. In addition to the survey report, which contains narrative and statistical information, a press release and summary on the survey are provided. (SW)

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RENEWING EXCELLENCE

The 1984 New England Legislative Survey

A regional project supported by the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education

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The 1984 New England Legislative Survey

A cooperative project of the New England Board of Higher Education, the Caucus of New England State Legislatures and the National Conference of State Legislatures

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November 1984

1984 NEW ENGLAND LEGISLATIVE SURVEY

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FOREWORD

How do state legislators view higher education in New England? The results of the 1984 NEBHE Survey of New England State Legislators, conducted with the support and collaboration of the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education, the National Conference of State Legislatures and the Caucus of New England State Legislatures, reveal their priorities in a number of important respects.

Over half of New England's 1323 state legislators responded. The respondents are almost unanimous, nine out of ten, in citing the quality of higher education in the region and in pointing out its importance to the economy (98 percent). They favor a variety of tax incentives, supports and exemptions, all designed to aid higher education, and they also tend to favor support of private higher education through state scholarships and research grants—a point of greater issue in the past. Ninety-three percent of legislators believe that higher education can and should play a major role in helping to retrain New England's labor force for its ongoing revolution in high technology and its anticipated applications. They seem confident that such retraining can be coordinated at the regional level.

With each question the survey clearly uncovers legislative willingness to seek improved modes of support for higher education at the community, corporate and state house levels with particular emphasis on incentives for collaboration in behalf of the higher education enterprise that will produce the kind of skilled graduates or research applications beneficial to economic development.

The survey results make clear that much better communication needs to take place among leaders in government, industry and education (only 24 percent believe there is enough communication). According to nine of every ten respondents, higher education needs to do a better job of explaining its programs to legislators and provide them with improved information on institutional effectiveness.

The overriding tone throughout the report is one of legislative good will and respect towards our colleges and universities and their future significance. It is well that this strong positive mood exists, for New England is about to undergo a severe challenge in the retraining and re-educating of its adult workforce in the face of increasing demands by industry for new skills and capabilities, and in the face of a rapid decline in the number of high school graduates each year from now to the end of the century. Business, of course, plays the primary role in providing training and retraining for jobs. State government has the responsibility to define the public policy interest and acts as a catalyst in behalf of citizens. The job retraining role ought to be among the concerns of the modern university, as pointed out by President Clark Kerr of the University of California in his famous 1963

Godkin Lectures at Harvard when he said the modern university created in the 1870's emphasized research and "occupational training." This is decidedly not to suggest that all undergraduate programs should be occupational in nature. Our graduate research training, the source of much of our technological innovation, is itself built on rigorous undergraduate education in the liberal arts and sciences.

Nevertheless, public sentiment nationally and in New England clearly is calling for fulfillment in the 1980's of the promise of a modern multipurpose system of higher education. Continuing education programs, because of their flexibility and adaptability, offer great potential for development of job retraining courses. But retraining programs must also be rigorous. The appropriate questions to be resolved by higher education, government and business will increasingly focus on the quality of retraining offered, and for whom, and at what cost; not whether the priority itself is appropriate. The realities of demography and technological competition demand a creative response at all levels of higher education, and require the close collaboration with industry and government that state legislators seem fully prepared to offer.

In 1982, Senator Robert J. McKenna, Chairman of the New England Board of Higher Education wrote in his foreword to *Financing Higher Education: The Public Investment* (NEBHE): "What we must now do is emphasize that higher education is not only good in itself, but also that, either in the short run or, more importantly, in the long run, investment in higher education must result in substantial augmentation of the economic base of a particular state and of the New England region. My own impression is that the value of the investment in higher education has not been fully understood intellectually and certainly not in terms of the emotion-laden response of legislators and governors when the chips are down and they must cope with a shortfall in taxes or an excess in expenditures in the state budget." In reviewing the 1984 survey results, Senator McKenna commented. "I am very encouraged by the evidence of progress since 1982. The climate for public investment in higher education has improved markedly and rapidly throughout New England."

We are deeply gratified by the cooperation 705 legislators throughout New England provided in responding to this effort, and believe the results are indicative of an emerging period of collaboration based upon the attitudes revealed by the survey and the public policy options thereby suggested.

John C. Hoy
President
New England Board of Higher Education

Boston, Massachusetts
October 1984

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

NEBHE's 1984 Survey of New England State Legislators provides insight into their attitudes and concerns regarding several key issues in higher education. The survey addresses five major topics in higher education: (1) quality; (2) role in economic development; (3) finance; (4) communication between educators and legislators, and (5) role in retraining mid-career workers. A similar study of New England leadership was done by NEBHE in 1980 including college and university presidents, corporate executives, legislative leaders and the region's six governors.

Highlights

- Legislators score 98 percent in believing that higher education is vital to New England's economy, virtually identical to the high score recorded by the region's leadership overall in 1980.
- Three-quarters of legislators favor increased state funding for colleges and universities and an even larger number, nine out of ten, support tax incentives for industry to contribute to higher education.
- Nearly nine out of ten legislators support High-Technology Morrill Act legislation in their own states.
- Nine of ten legislators are impressed with the quality of New England's higher education, considerably higher than the two-thirds who think well of the quality of higher education overall in the United States.
- Communication between legislators and educators has improved since 1980 but still falls far short of the mark.
- Nine of ten legislators want academia to furnish better data to government than it has been getting.
- Legislators recognize the need for retraining of workers with obsolete skills and nine of ten believe institutions of higher education have an important role to play in retraining for high demand occupations.

Summary Analysis

I. Quality of Higher Education

Summary: Legislators hold the quality of higher education in New England in high regard. Ninety percent of the respondents believe the quality of higher education in New England is excellent or good, and very few feel it is fair or poor. By comparison, only two-thirds think the overall quality of higher education in the United States is excellent or good and 30 percent rated it fair.

Responses:

Question: What is your personal impression of the overall quality of a college or university education *in New England?*

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Don't Know
CT (N = 117)	24.8%	61.5%	11.1%	—	2.6%
MA (N = 103)	35.9%	56.3%	6.8%	—	1.0%
RI (N = 82)	35.4%	58.5%	4.9%	—	1.2%
ME (N = 103)	38.5%	54.4%	5.8%	1.0%	—
NH (N = 173)	42.2%	49.1%	6.4%	—	2.3%
VT (N = 108)	27.8%	60.2%	11.1%	—	.9%
Totals (N = 686)	34.7%	56.0%	7.7%	.1%	1.5%

Question: What is your personal impression of the overall quality of a college or university education *in the U.S.?*

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Don't Know
CT (N = 119)	7.6%	51.3%	36.1%	—	5.0%
MA (N = 102)	10.7%	57.3%	30.1%	1.0%	1.0%
RI (N = 83)	13.7%	57.8%	24.1%	—	2.4%
ME (N = 104)	10.6%	54.8%	30.8%	—	3.8%
NH (N = 173)	15.6%	47.4%	30.1%	2.9%	4.0%
VT (N = 108)	9.3%	59.3%	26.9%	1.9%	2.8%
Totals (N = 690)	11.7%	53.8%	30.0%	1.2%	3.3%

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II. Role of Higher Education In Economic Development

Summary: Legislators are nearly unanimous in believing that higher education is either very important or fairly important to the New England economy. These opinions held by legislators reflect the views of the general public in New England as well as in other regions of the country. A 1983 poll of the general public co-sponsored by NEBHE and conducted by the Group Attitudes Corporation of New York City indicated that 91 percent of New England residents and 87 percent of the U.S. population as a whole feel it is important that the resources of colleges and universities be applied to economic growth in their state. Eighty-six percent of legislators view higher education as an industry in the region's economy, ahead of the 80 percent of regional leaders who held that view in NEBHE's 1980 leadership survey.

Responses:

Question: How important do you think New England's institutions of higher learning are to the economy of the region?

	Very Important	Fairly Important	Not too Important	Not Important at all	Don't Know
CT (N = 120)	65.8%	30.0%	3.3%	—	.8%
MA (N = 103)	85.4%	14.6%	—	—	—
RI (N = 82)	75.6%	20.7%	2.4%	—	1.2%
ME (N = 105)	78.1%	20.0%	1.9%	—	—
NH (N = 178)	87.1%	11.8%	1.1%	—	—
VT (N = 109)	86.2%	11.9%	1.8%	—	—
Totals (N = 697)	80.3%	17.6%	1.7%	—	.3%

Question: Some people think of New England's higher educational institutions as an industry in the region's economy. Do you agree with this view?

	Yes	No
CT (N = 115)	75.7%	24.3%
MA (N = 101)	92.1%	7.9%
RI (N = 81)	82.7%	17.3%
ME (N = 102)	87.3%	12.7%
NH (N = 138)	83.1%	16.9%
VT (N = 109)	93.6%	6.4%
Totals (N = 674)	85.5%	14.5%

III. Financing Higher Education

Summary: A large majority of legislators support increased state funding for colleges and universities and overwhelmingly favor tax incentives for industry to help education. On balance legislators favor support for private institutions through tax incentives, scholarship programs and financial aid for scientific and technological research. In addition, 87 percent favor a state level "High Technology Morrill Act" to provide matching grants for business and educational partnerships to strengthen science, engineering and technology in colleges and universities. A majority believe university land should be exempt from property taxes and that local communities as a result should be reimbursed by the state for part of the tax revenue they lose.

Responses:

Question: If someone suggested increasing state funding for colleges and universities, what would be your response to the suggestion?

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
CT (N = 120)	28.3%	45.0%	15.0%	5.0%	6.7%
MA (N = 100)	29.0%	53.0%	11.0%	4.0%	3.0%
RI (N = 78)	34.6%	42.3%	15.4%	1.3%	6.4%
ME (N = 104)	28.8%	52.9%	9.6%	2.9%	5.8%
NH (N = 175)	44.6%	30.3%	13.1%	4.6%	7.4%
VT (N = 107)	13.1%	52.3%	20.6%	7.5%	6.5%
Totals (N = 684)	31.0%	44.4%	14.0%	4.4%	6.1%

Question: Do you support special tax incentives to encourage corporate contributions to educational institutions (e.g., equipment, personnel and facilities)?

	Yes	No
CT (N = 117)	89.4%	10.6%
MA (N = 94)	95.7%	4.3%
RI (N = 76)	90.8%	9.2%
ME (N = 96)	90.6%	9.4%
NH (N = 157)	91.7%	8.3%
VT (N = 95)	90.5%	9.5%
Totals (N = 622)	91.5%	8.5%

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Question: Do you think state government should provide scholarships to students attending private colleges and universities?

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
CT (N = 119)	19.3%	41.2%	22.7%	15.1%	1.7%
MA (N = 102)	28.4%	37.3%	13.7%	14.7%	5.9%
RI (N = 80)	25.0%	33.8%	22.5%	13.8%	5.0%
ME (N = 103)	7.8%	33.0%	27.2%	21.4%	10.7%
NH (N = 177)	15.8%	28.2%	22.6%	26.0%	7.3%
VT (N = 111)	33.3%	26.1%	23.4%	8.1%	9.0%
Totals (N = 692)	21.0%	32.8%	22.1%	17.5%	6.6%

Question: Do you think state government should provide financial support for scientific and technological research at private colleges and universities?

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
CT (N = 119)	12.6%	47.1%	26.9%	10.9%	2.5%
MA (N = 101)	19.8%	46.5%	19.8%	7.9%	5.9%
RI (N = 82)	24.4%	42.7%	20.7%	8.5%	3.7%
ME (N = 104)	13.5%	47.1%	21.2%	10.6%	7.7%
NH (N = 177)	15.3%	33.3%	26.0%	15.8%	9.6%
VT (N = 110)	13.6%	37.3%	24.5%	13.6%	10.9%
Totals (N = 693)	16.0%	41.4%	23.7%	11.8%	7.1%

Question: At the national level, the High Technology Morrill Act proposes to establish a matching grants program to strengthen science, engineering and technology in our colleges and universities by providing "federal assistance for joint initiatives" of private industry, educational institutions and state governments. Would you support similar legislation in your own state?

	Yes	No
CT (N = 103)	86.4%	13.6%
MA (N = 93)	93.5%	6.5%
RI (N = 75)	90.7%	9.3%
ME (N = 95)	90.5%	9.5%
NH (N = 166)	83.1%	16.9%
VT (N = 101)	83.2%	16.8%
Totals (N = 633)	87.2%	12.8%

Question: Do you think colleges and universities in your state should be exempt from paying real property taxes on land they own that is used for educational purposes?

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
CT (N = 116)	41.4%	40.5%	13.8%	2.6%	1.7%
MA (N = 103)	26.2%	43.7%	20.4%	4.9%	4.9%
RI (N = 82)	35.4%	34.1%	18.3%	12.2%	—
ME (N = 104)	47.1%	30.8%	13.5%	4.8%	3.8%
NH (N = 176)	50.0%	24.4%	14.8%	7.4%	3.4%
VT (N = 111)	38.7%	37.8%	12.6%	6.3%	4.5%
Totals (N = 692)	41.0%	34.2%	15.3%	6.2%	3.2%

Question: Some people feel that the property tax exemption is a well-deserved benefit for campuses, but that states may need to reimburse localities for part of the tax revenues lost. Do you agree with this view?

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
CT (N = 120)	32.5%	40.0%	15.8%	9.2%	2.5%
MA (N = 100)	21.0%	49.0%	20.0%	6.0%	4.0%
RI (N = 82)	14.6%	43.9%	11.0%	28.0%	2.4%
ME (N = 104)	19.2%	46.2%	15.4%	15.4%	3.8%
NH (N = 178)	21.9%	37.6%	19.1%	16.9%	4.5%
VT (N = 111)	16.2%	45.0%	18.9%	16.2%	3.6%
Totals (N = 695)	21.4%	42.9%	17.1%	15.0%	3.6%

IV. Communication Between Educators and Legislators

Summary: Unfortunately, educators and legislators communicate with each other less than each thinks desirable. In the 1980 NEBHE leadership survey only 23 percent reported satisfaction with the extent of communication between institutions of higher education and government. Response from legislators in this year's survey was almost identical. An even smaller percentage of legislators report satisfaction with the data supplied by colleges and universities for evaluating the effectiveness with which they use tax revenues. Less than a third of legislators had been contacted by representatives of New England's institutions of higher education and just over a quarter had taken the initiative to contact educators to discuss how to use their respective resources to mutual advantage.

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Responses:

Question: Do you agree with the view that there is enough communication between New England's higher educational institutions and the region's legislators on how they can help each other?

	Yes	No
CT (N = 116)	22.4%	77.6%
MA (N = 100)	22.0%	78.0%
RI (N = 80)	15.0%	85.0%
ME (N = 99)	20.2%	79.8%
NH (N = 174)	20.7%	79.3%
VT (N = 105)	41.0%	59.0%
Totals (N = 674)	23.6%	76.4%

Question: Have you been contacted by any representatives of New England's higher educational institutions to discuss how to use your respective resources to mutual advantage?

	Yes	No
CT (N = 117)	29.1%	71.9%
MA (N = 101)	43.6%	56.4%
RI (N = 82)	15.9%	84.1%
ME (N = 103)	27.2%	72.8%
NH (N = 174)	25.3%	74.7%
VT (N = 109)	41.3%	58.7%
Totals (N = 686)	30.3%	69.7%

Question: Have you taken the initiative and contacted any representatives of New England's higher educational institutions to discuss how to use your respective resources to mutual advantage?

	Yes	No
CT (N = 118)	29.7%	70.3%
MA (N = 101)	46.5%	53.5%
RI (N = 82)	24.4%	75.6%
ME (N = 99)	25.4%	74.7%
NH (N = 173)	23.7%	76.3%
VT (N = 111)	20.7%	79.3%
Totals (N = 684)	27.9%	72.1%

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Question: "Government must be supplied with better data by academia if it is to judge the effectiveness with which higher education uses the tax revenues it receives." Do you agree with this statement?

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
CT (N=119)	48.7%	42.0%	5.0%	.8%	3.4%
MA (N=101)	49.5%	43.6%	3.0%	—	4.0%
RI (N=83)	66.3%	20.5%	3.6%	4.8%	4.8%
ME (N=103)	50.5%	39.8%	7.8%	—	1.9%
NH (N=179)	55.3%	31.8%	8.4%	2.8%	1.7%
VT (N=109)	50.5%	37.6%	3.7%	2.8%	5.5%
Totals (N=694)	53.2%	36.0%	5.6%	1.9%	3.3%

Question: Certain economic trends for both public and private higher education in your state, the region and the nation may be important. Would information on the following be useful? (Percentage responding "yes".)

Trends in:	Tuition	Faculty Salaries	Federal Grants and Contracts	Total Expenditures	Other
CT (N=104)	89.4%	78.4%	86.5%	86.3%	76.7%
MA (N=94)	95.7%	77.4%	91.5%	87.9%	75.0%
RI (N=76)	90.8%	86.1%	92.1%	84.5%	84.2%
ME (N=96)	90.6%	81.3%	89.4%	81.7%	75.0%
NH (N=157)	91.7%	77.9%	91.8%	88.5%	64.7%
VT (N=95)	90.5%	80.9%	87.9%	86.8%	64.5%
Totals (N=622)	91.5%	79.9%	90.0%	86.2%	72.4%

V. Role of Higher Education in Retraining Mid-career Workers

Summary: Legislators agree that there is an important need for the retraining of workers with obsolete skills in their respective states and that it is important that institutions of higher education assist in this retraining. Two-thirds believe that New England colleges and universities are doing a good job in meeting the labor force needs of private industries in the region. This represents a notable gain over the 47 percent favorable response by legislators to this question in 1980. Clearly higher education has been responding to industries' needs and legislators recognize that fact.

While the overwhelming majority of retraining programs actually in New England two-year and four-year colleges seem to be aimed at workers of age 45 or under, most legislators see the greatest need for retraining at age levels between 35 and 55. Legislators are divided in their views on the appropriate method for funding retraining. Almost

half indicate they would support direct funding of vocational education while over 40 percent feel that tax incentives or other benefits should be provided to the private sector. Legislators indicated the lowest support for subsidies to individual workers to pay for retraining.

Responses:

Question: What importance would you assign to the need for retraining programs for workers with obsolete skills in your state?

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Somewhat Unimportant	Very Unimportant	Don't Know
CT (N = 120)	71.7%	25.0%	.8%	2.5%	—
MA (N = 102)	74.5%	25.5%	—	—	—
RI (N = 82)	84.1%	13.4%	2.4%	—	—
ME (N = 105)	61.9%	33.3%	3.8%	—	1.0%
NH (N = 176)	74.4%	27.2%	2.8%	—	.6%
VT (N = 110)	71.8%	24.5%	2.7%	.9%	—
Totals (N = 695)	72.8%	24.2%	2.2%	.6%	.3%

Question: In your opinion, which age group most needs retraining programs?

Age:	26–35	36–45	46–55	56 +
CT (N = 106)	8.5%	27.4%	61.3%	2.8%
MA (N = 90)	8.9%	42.2%	46.7%	2.2%
RI (N = 76)	5.3%	48.7%	40.8%	5.3%
ME (N = 94)	10.6%	47.9%	37.2%	4.3%
NH (N = 144)	15.3%	45.1%	36.1%	3.5%
VT (N = 96)	14.6%	43.8%	38.5%	3.1%
Totals (N = 606)	11.1%	42.2%	43.2%	3.5%

Question: How important do you think it is that institutions of higher education in your state directly assist in retraining workers for occupational skills that will be in demand by industry?

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Somewhat Unimportant	Very Unimportant	Don't Know
CT (N = 117)	53.0%	36.8%	7.7%	1.7%	.9%
MA (N = 101)	65.3%	29.7%	5.0%	—	—
RI (N = 81)	67.9%	23.5%	4.9%	2.5%	1.2%
ME (N = 105)	61.0%	29.5%	8.6%	—	1.0%
NH (N = 177)	66.1%	28.2%	4.0%	1.7%	—
VT (N = 109)	59.6%	33.9%	2.8%	.9%	2.8%
Totals (N = 690)	62.2%	30.4%	5.4%	1.2%	.9%

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Question: How would you rank New England's colleges and universities on helping to meet the labor-force needs of private industries in the region?

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Don't Know
CT (N = 120)	7.5%	50.8%	35.0%	3.3%	3.3%
MA (N = 101)	17.8%	67.3%	11.9%	1.0%	2.0%
RI (N = 83)	12.0%	53.0%	28.9%	1.2%	4.8%
ME (N = 104)	13.5%	48.1%	26.9%	7.7%	3.8%
NH (N = 176)	10.8%	58.0%	25.6%	2.8%	2.8%
VT (N = 110)	8.2%	50.0%	35.5%	.9%	5.5%
Totals (N = 694)	11.4%	54.8%	27.4%	2.9%	3.6%

Question: What do you think is the most cost-effective way to finance job retraining?

	Invest in Voc Ed	Subsidies to Individuals	Tax Incentives	Other
CT (N = 112)	29.5%	9.8%	53.6%	7.1%
MA (N = 89)	30.3%	13.5%	49.4%	6.7%
RI (N = 78)	38.5%	9.0%	43.6%	9.0%
ME (N = 98)	62.2%	5.1%	27.6%	5.1%
NH (N = 162)	56.8%	7.4%	32.7%	3.1%
VT (N = 100)	42.0%	5.0%	49.0%	4.0%
Totals (N = 639)	44.6%	8.1%	41.8%	5.5%

Question: Would you support a coordinated system for labor retraining in New England?

	Yes	No
CT (N = 105)	89.5%	10.5%
MA (N = 93)	93.5%	6.5%
RI (N = 78)	91.0%	9.0%
ME (N = 77)	90.9%	9.1%
NH (N = 158)	90.5%	9.5%
VT (N = 98)	83.7%	16.3%
Totals (N = 609)	89.8%	10.2%

NEBHE 1984 SURVEY OF NEW ENGLAND STATE LEGISLATORS

Political scientists frequently describe the legislative branch of state government as the most idiosyncratic and least likely to form lasting regional ties. This New England legislative opinion poll suggests otherwise.

The 1984 Survey of New England State Legislators reflects certain common interests of NEBHE, the Fund for the Improvement of Post-secondary Education (FIPSE) and the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL). FIPSE has provided a three-year grant to NEBHE for a series of legislative briefings, state seminars and special publications designed to help legislators define the role of higher education in the development of the new knowledge-intensive, high-tech economy of New England. NCSL has supported NEBHE's effort to collect and disseminate information bearing specifically on the retraining of New England's mid-career work force.

The 1984 legislative survey thus includes questions related to issues of common concern to government, industry and higher education as well as items focused specifically on the retraining of New England's work force. One Rhode Island state senator wrote in reaction to NEBHE's inititiative in this field, "I'm a brand-new legislator but I do have a sincere interest in job training and the role colleges and universities should play in working with government, business and industry. Great idea!"

National studies on the legislative process confirm that in view of their excessive work loads and limited staff support, what legislators want and need most is informed policy analysis, synthesis, and, where possible, bottom-line conclusions to enlighten their deliberations. For NEBHE to satisfy those needs in the area of higher education, surveying the legislators directly as to their attitudes, preferences and level of knowledge was a logical place to start the grant project.

Legislative Rate of Response

It is noteworthy that in the total universe of 1323 legislators in the six states, over 50 percent responded, an achievement that is nothing short of remarkable for such a large group not noted for its docility. The rates of return by state were as follows:

	Total Number	Number Responding	Percentage
CT	187	120	64.2%
MA	200	104	52.0%
RI	150	83	55.3%
ME	184	105	57.1%
NH	424	181	42.7%
VT	178	112	62.9%
Totals	1323	705	53.3%

Although not a strictly representative sample, it is clearly a significant and diverse one, a fact that renders even more impressive the surprising degree of unanimity of some of the reported opinions.

Role of Higher Education in the Economy

Legislators are nearly (98 percent) unanimous in believing that higher education is either very important or fairly important to the New England economy (Table 1), a figure nearly identical to the 97 percent of New England's leadership who thought so in NEBHE's 1980 survey. Eighty-five percent agree (Table 2) that higher education itself is an important industry, again approximating the percentage of leaders who believed so in 1980. They also agree (97 percent) that there is an important need for the retraining of workers with obsolete skills in their respective states (Table 19) and that it is important (92.6 percent) that institutions of higher education assist in this retraining (Table 20). There is some restlessness about translating retraining ideas into action as expressed by participants at NEBHE's December 1983 conference at the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and as noted by a Maine legislative leader in her survey response: "Too much talk—no action on this issue."

In respect to economic development, legislators reflect the views of the general public in New England as well as in other regions of the country. A 1983 poll of the general public co-sponsored by NEBHE and carried out by Group Attitudes Corp. of New York City indicated that 91 percent of New England residents and 87 percent of the U.S. population as a whole feel that it is important that the resources of colleges and universities be applied to economic growth in their states.

Educators' Attitudes Towards Retraining

The overwhelming agreement among legislators that higher education should participate directly in the retraining of workers is not matched among all areas of higher education. A 1984 NEBHE survey of the directors of continuing education in the 257 chartered institutions of higher education in New England produced the 101 responses reported in Appendix 1. While virtually all the respondents from two-year colleges (public and private) and most of the respondents from four-year public colleges saw retraining as somewhat or very important, more than half the respondents from private four-year colleges felt that retraining programs were either unimportant or not applicable to them. No doubt private institutions view themselves as educators of managers and other professionals rather than as trainers or re-trainers of workers. Some of the legislators responding to this questionnaire have cautioned (see summary following Table 27) that business, not government or higher education, should be managing the effort at retraining and that high schools and vocational technical community colleges not four-year colleges are the appropriate locus for retraining efforts.

Yet the facts are that the population of the southern tier of the New England states, at least, is aging more rapidly and growing more slowly (see Appendix 3 and 4) than that of the country as a whole and will be experiencing a dramatically greater decline in the number of high school graduates from now to the end of the century. If a revolution in high technology is to be carried out, it will have to be carried out in substantial part by present members of the work force. We cannot build our new industrial revolution with the hands and minds of the next generation alone. There simply will not be enough of them.

So the issue of retraining *is* a live one and higher education and government *are* already involved. Of 36 public colleges responding to the survey noted above, 27 reported operating one or more retraining programs while 29 of the 65 private colleges responding reported one or more such programs.

The Need for Better Communication

Unfortunately there is less communication among educators, legislators and business leaders than each see as desirable. In the 1980 NEBHE leadership survey only 23 percent reported being satisfied with the extent of communication between institutions of higher education and government. Table 8 of this year's survey reports a virtually identical response from legislators. An even smaller percentage (11 percent) reports being satisfied with the data being supplied by colleges and universities as a basis for judgment on funding (Table 16). At the same time legislators are impressed with the quality of education in New England (Table 3B), overwhelmingly favor tax incentives to industry to

help education (Table 5), favor increased funding of colleges and universities (Table 11) and, also tend to favor help to private institutions through support of scholarship programs (Table 12) or scientific and technological research (Table 13). Not surprisingly the majority supports property tax exemptions for university land used for educational purposes (Table 14), but more surprisingly a majority also supports the idea of state reimbursement to local communities for part of tax revenue thus lost (Table 15).

Quality of New England Higher Education

The generally high regard in which legislators hold the quality of higher education in New England is apparent in a comparison of Tables 3A and B with 90 percent of the respondents rating New England colleges as good or excellent while only 65 percent of colleges in the nation at large receive such a rating. A clear two-thirds majority of legislators believe that these same New England colleges are doing a good or excellent job in helping to meet the labor-force needs of private industry in the region (Table 4), up from the 47 percent favorable response to essentially the same question in the 1980 leadership survey. Clearly, higher education has begun to respond and legislators recognize that fact. A Connecticut state senator says, "Your questionnaire has brought to my attention a resource I have not used adequately and that is the special departments that deal with human services and economics in our institutions of higher learning. Why should we overlook this area of information and assistance? I intend to start some inquiries today."

It is quite possible that the recognition of the positive response from higher education explains at least in part the rather dramatic 87 percent "yes" response (Table 7) to the question of whether legislators favored a state level "High Technology Morrill Act" to provide a matching grants program to strengthen science, engineering and technology in our institutions of higher education.

New England's strength has always been found in higher education, technology and human resources. It is not surprising then that New England's legislators share common concerns with President Reagan's Commission on Industrial Competitiveness which is scheduled to make its recommendations in December, 1984. John Young, chairman of the Commission and president of the Hewlett-Packard Company, emphasizes human resources as one of the five major national factors affecting America's international industrial competitiveness. The human resource factor, according to Young, takes into account *cost*, *quality* and *supply*, especially in engineering and science, which greatly influence the ability of the nation and its states to compete both overseas and at home.

A Coordinated System of Labor Retraining

As for the funding of retraining *per se* (Table 22), the legislators were split between the idea of direct funding of vocational education (44.6 percent) and tax incentives or other benefits to the private sector (41.8 percent) with the idea of subsidies to individual workers to pay for retraining substantially less popular (8.1 percent).

The legislators gave a strong vote of support for the idea of a coordinated system for labor retraining in New England (Table 25) with 89.8 percent announcing themselves in favor. Such unanimity is essentially consistent with the high degree of support reported by a sample of the New England public (1983 Group Attitudes Corporation Survey) to a question about their reactions to the idea of interstate cooperation in academic program offerings and tuition breaks. People appear to realize that greater interstate cooperation in education and training leads to better information, more choices, and improved job opportunities for themselves. Seventy-nine percent of New Englanders favored such cooperation as compared to 68 percent in the national sample. A House member in the state of Vermont emphasizes a regional and state approach over a centralized program. He points out, "New England is somewhat unique in terms of its problems with unemployment. I therefore feel strongly that a regional approach to job skill retraining would be better than one which Washington may devise. After we have a regional approach it should be broken down more to states and regions within the states. Colleges and universities which provide technical training should be encouraged to cooperate—ones that do not should be encouraged to expand (we need more colleges which provide people with job skills)."

Who Needs to be Retrained?

While the overwhelming majority (88 percent) of retraining programs actually in being in New England two-year and four-year colleges seem to be aimed at workers of age 45 or under (Appendix 2), many legislators (46.7 percent) see the greatest need for retraining at age levels above 45 (Table 21). To the extent that the "high-tech revolution" will affect not only the high-tech industry itself but workers in all industries and to the extent that New England workers in manufacturing have a median age of more than 50, the retraining of the post 45-ers seems a legitimate concern.

Legislators admit that they are not well informed about model legislation for retraining programs with only 15 percent (Table 24) indicating that they are aware of such legislation. Their primary sources of information about retraining needs (Table 23) appears to be the government itself (cited by 62.8 percent), followed by the print media (57.2 percent), committee staff (41.3 percent), organized labor (39.7 percent), and television (25.4 percent).

Legislative Information Sources

Sources of information cited as most helpful in making general judgments about funding for higher education (Table 17) were, in order: 1) data demonstrating the application of college resources to economic development in your state; 2) annual data demonstrating proficiency in student learning; 3) first-hand visits to college campuses; 4) oral testimony by college officials, and 5) visual presentations by college officials. Economic trend information about tuition, federal contracts and grants and total expenditures is viewed as especially useful to legislators (Table 6).

Influences regarded as most important for decision-making about funding for higher education were ranked on the average as follows (Table 18): 1) constituents; 2) legislative colleagues; 3) committee chairpersons; 4) legislative leadership, and 5) the governors. It is interesting in the light of the findings to note again that the legislators' positive opinions about higher education closely parallel those of the public surveyed by the Group Attitudes Corporation as cited above. The legislators are indeed in touch with their own constituents.

Education Level of Respondents

The survey questionnaire asked respondents about their own educational backgrounds (Table 27). Roughly two-thirds of the legislators were college graduates and one-third were not. Responses to each question of the survey were tallied against educational level of the respondent. Responses of college graduates were almost identical with those of non-college graduates on all questions but two. Legislators who had *not* graduated from college held a higher opinion of the quality of higher education than those who had graduated, but ironically were somewhat less inclined to increase funding for it.

Summary

What, then, in summary, emerges from this legislative survey? New England legislators, like members of the general public in New England, see their colleges and universities as vital to the economic development of the region. They are favorably disposed to direct aid to higher education or special incentives to industry to move retraining programs forward, but they feel strongly the need for better communication among government, higher education and business and better information about retraining needs, retraining programs and model legislation on retraining. They are strongly disposed to regional collaboration on retraining programs. A House member of the Massachusetts legislature puts it this way: "I am very pleased that you are seriously re-evaluating the role of higher education in the workplace for retraining our constituents. I see no conflict in colleges pursuing both academic horizons and realistic job skills; surely society will be the great beneficiary of such bold educational ventures."

Reading between the lines of the questionnaire one senses a strong, positive, if not totally uncritical attitude of good will toward both higher education and business. One senses an earnest desire for better communication among the sectors of government, business and education and for better interchange of good information about educational and training needs and opportunities. But beyond all this one senses a regional loyalty and an enthusiasm for regional economic and educational development. The public, the legislators, higher education and business all seem ready to pitch in if appropriate programs are designed for each of the parties concerned. Is not now the time to take advantage of common concern and mutual respect and translate it into effective public policy? In the words of a House member of the New Hampshire legislature, "Keep up this kind of initiative and soon concrete proposals and graphic results will follow."

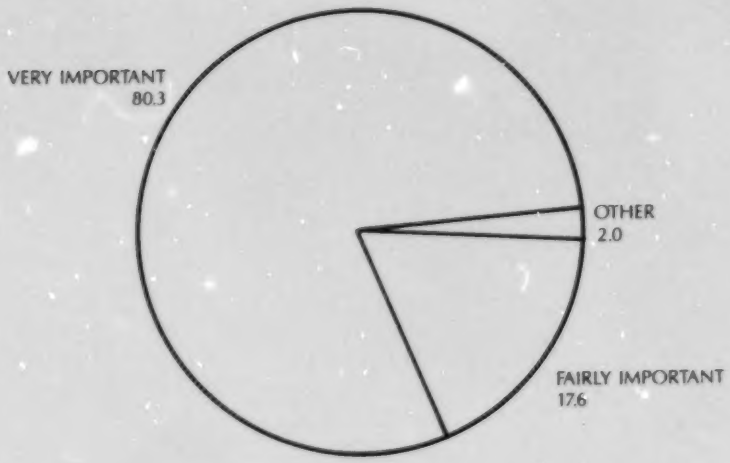
TABLES

NEBHE 1984 Survey of New England Legislators
Table 1

Importance of Higher Education to the Economy

Question: How important do you think New England's institutions of higher learning are to the economy of the region?

	Very Important	Fairly Important	Not too Important	Not Important at all	Don't Know
CT (N = 120)	65.8%	30.0%	3.3%	—	.8%
MA (N = 103)	85.4%	14.6%	—	—	—
RI (N = 82)	75.6%	20.7%	2.4%	—	1.2%
ME (N = 105)	78.1%	20.0%	1.9%	—	—
NH (N = 178)	87.1%	11.8%	1.1%	—	—
VT (N = 109)	86.2%	11.9%	1.8%		
Totals (N = 697)	80.3%	17.6%	1.7%	—	.3%



Sum of percent grouped by category

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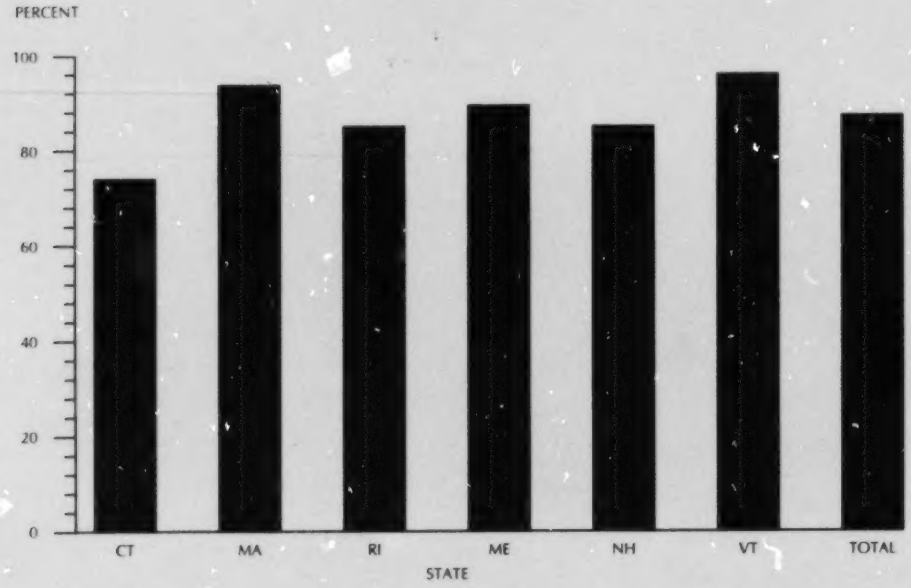
NEBHE 1984 Survey of New England Legislators
Table 2

Higher Education as an Industry

Question: Some people think of New England's higher educational institutions as an industry in the region's economy. Do you agree with this view?

	Yes	No
CT (N = 115)	75.7%	24.3%
MA (N = 101)	92.1%	7.9%
RI (N = 81)	82.7%	17.3%
ME (N = 102)	87.3%	12.7%
NH (N = 138)	83.1%	16.9%
VT (N = 109)	93.6%	6.4%
Total (N = 674)	85.5%	14.5%

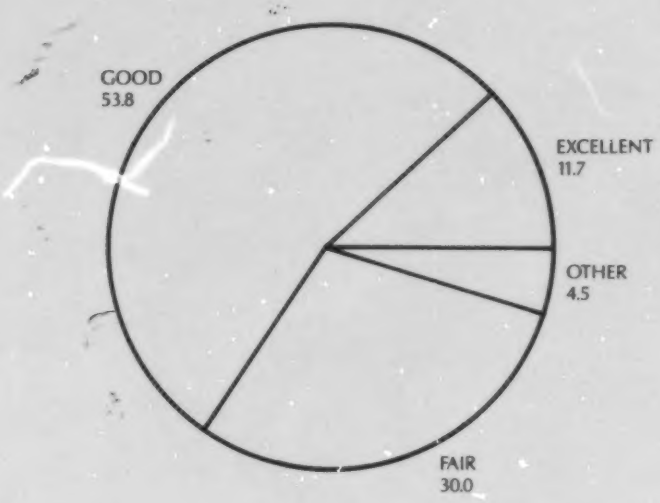


NEBHE 1984 Survey of New England Legislators
Table 3A

Quality of Higher Education in the U.S.

Question: What is your personal impression of the overall quality of a college or university education *in the U.S.?*

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Don't Know
CT (N = 119)	7.6%	51.3%	36.1%	—	5.0%
MA (N = 102)	10.7%	57.3%	30.1%	1.0%	1.0%
RI (N = 83)	15.7%	57.8%	24.1%	—	2.4%
ME (N = 104)	10.6%	54.8%	30.8%	—	3.8%
NH (N = 173)	15.6%	47.4%	30.1%	2.9%	4.0%
VT (N = 108)	9.3%	59.3%	26.9%	1.9%	2.8%
Totals (N = 690)	11.7%	53.8%	30.0%	1.2%	3.3%



Sum of percent grouped by category

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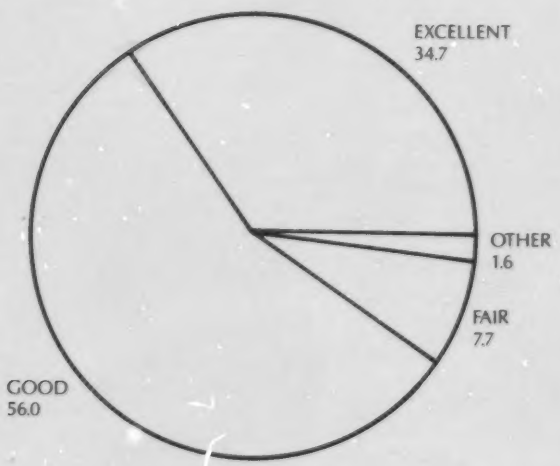
NEBHE 1984 Survey of New England Legislators
Table 3B

Quality of Higher Education in New England

Question: What is your personal impression of the overall quality of a college or university education *in New England?*

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Don't Know
CT (N = 117)	24.8%	61.5%	11.1%	—	2.6%
MA (N = 103)	35.9%	56.3%	6.8%	—	1.0%
RI (N = 82)	35.4%	58.5%	4.9%	—	1.2%
ME (N = 103)	38.5%	54.4%	5.8%	1.0%	—
NH (N = 173)	42.2%	49.1%	6.4%	—	2.3%
VT (N = 108)	27.8%	60.2%	11.1%	—	.9%
Totals (N = 686)	34.7%	56.0%	7.7%	.1%	1.5%



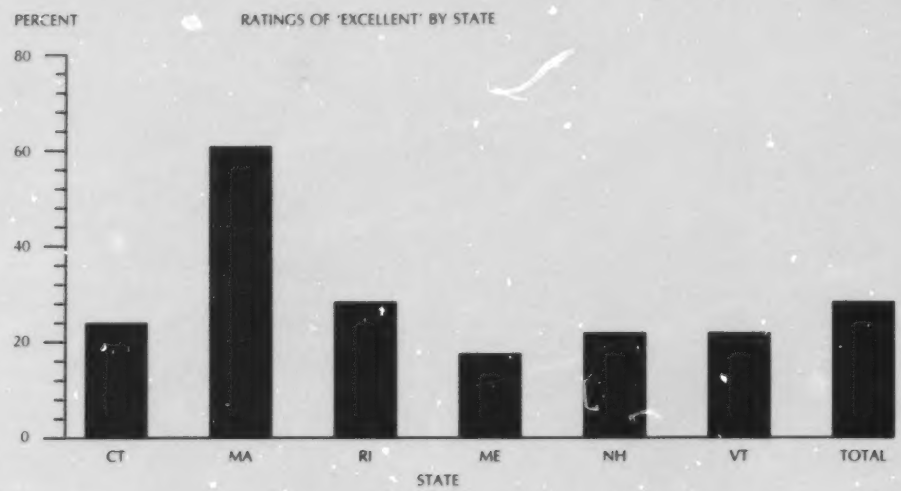
Sum of percent grouped by category

NEBHE 1984 Survey of New England Legislators
Table 3C

Quality of Higher Education in Your Own State

Question: What is your personal impression of the overall quality of a college or university education *in your own state?*

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Don't Know
CT (N = 115)	23.5%	60.9%	13.0%	.9%	1.7%
MA (N = 102)	60.8%	36.3%	2.9%	—	—
RI (N = 79)	27.8%	54.4%	16.5%	—	1.3%
ME (N = 101)	16.8%	63.4%	19.8%	—	—
NH (N = 171)	22.2%	56.7%	18.7%	1.2%	1.2%
VT (N = 108)	21.3%	65.7%	12.0%	—	.9%
Totals (N = 676)	28.0%	56.5%	14.2%	.4%	.9%



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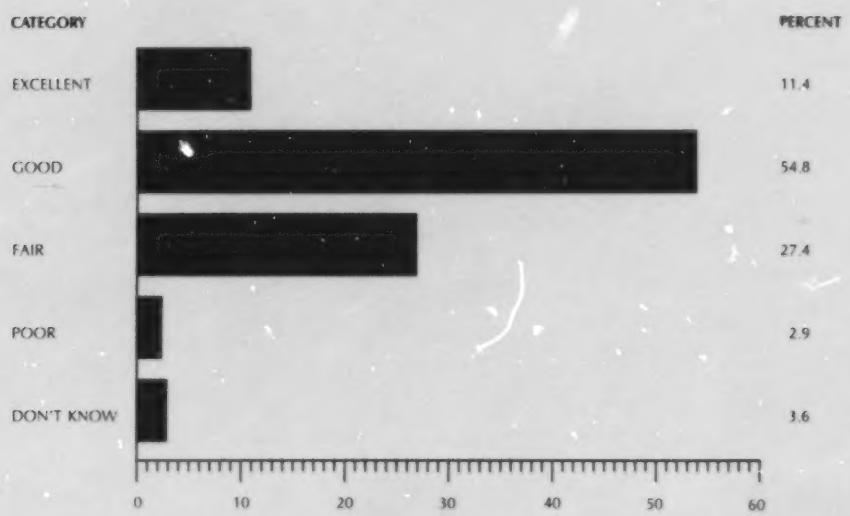
NEBHE 1984 Survey of New England Legislators
Table 4

Higher Education Meeting Labor Force Needs

Question: How would you rank New England's colleges and universities on helping to meet the labor-force needs of private industries in the region?

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Don't Know
CT (N = 120)	7.5%	50.8%	35.0%	3.3%	3.3%
MA (N = 101)	17.8%	67.3%	11.9%	1.0%	2.0%
RI (N = 83)	12.0%	53.0%	28.9%	1.2%	4.8%
ME (N = 104)	13.5%	48.1%	26.9%	7.7%	3.8%
NH (N = 176)	10.8%	58.0%	25.6%	2.8%	2.8%
VT (N = 110)	8.2%	50.0%	35.5%	.9%	5.5%
Totals (N = 694)	11.4%	54.8%	27.4%	2.9%	3.6%

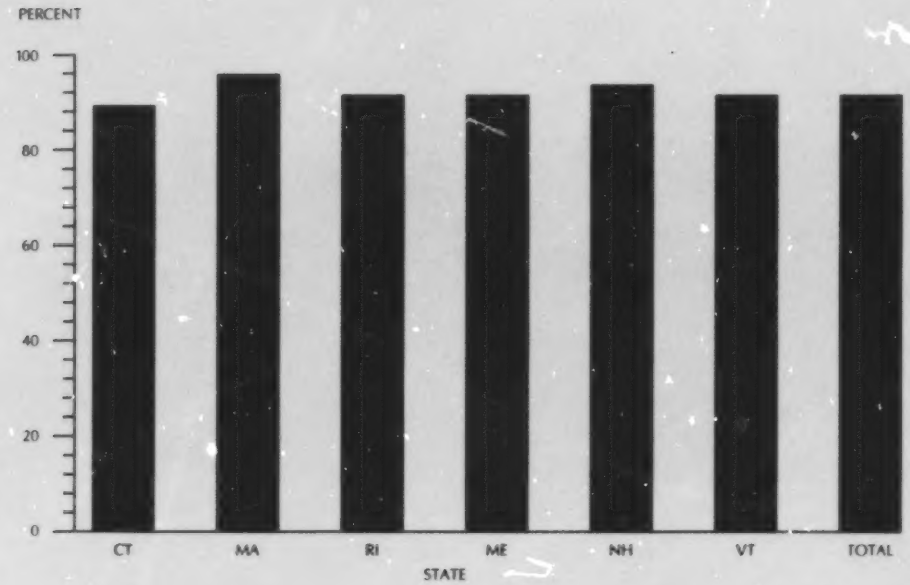


NEBHE 1984 Survey of New England Legislators
Table 5

Tax Incentives for Corporate Contributions to Education

Question: Do you support special tax incentives to encourage corporate contributions to educational institutions (e.g., equipment, personnel and facilities)?

	Yes	No
CT (N = 117)	89.4%	10.6%
MA (N = 94)	95.7%	4.3%
RI (N = 76)	90.8%	9.2%
ME (N = 96)	90.6%	9.4%
NH (N = 157)	91.7%	8.3%
VT (N = 95)	90.5%	9.5%
Totals (N = 622)	91.5%	8.5%



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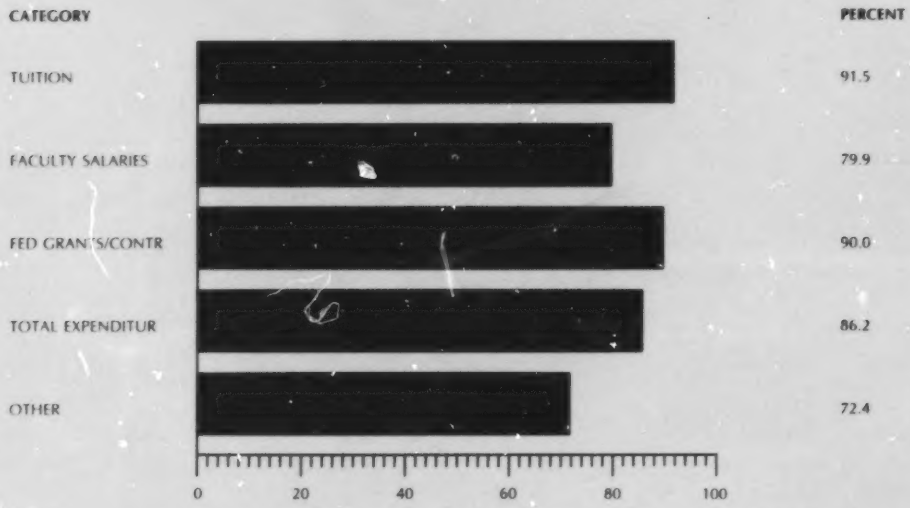
NEBHE 1984 Survey of New England Legislators
Table 6

Information Useful to Legislators

Question: Certain economic trends for both public and private higher education in your state, the region and the nation may be important. Would information on the following be useful? (Percentage responding "yes".)

Trends in:	Tuition	Faculty Salaries	Federal Grants and Contracts	Total Expenditures	Other
CT (N = 104)	89.4%	78.4%	86.5%	86.3%	76.7%
MA (N = 94)	95.7%	77.4%	91.5%	87.9%	75.0%
RI (N = 76)	90.8%	86.1%	92.1%	84.5%	84.2%
ME (N = 96)	90.6%	81.3%	89.4%	81.7%	75.0%
NH (N = 157)	91.7%	77.9%	91.8%	88.5%	64.7%
VT (N = 95)	90.5%	80.9%	87.9%	86.8%	64.5%
Totals (N = 622)	91.5%	79.9%	90.0%	86.2%	72.4%



NEBHE 1984 Survey of New England Legislators
Table 6A

Tabulation of responses to "Other" in Question No. 6

Information on:	CT	MA	RI	ME	NH	VT	Total
Scholarship and Financial Aid	3	1	1	2	2		9
Community Services	1		1			1	3
State Appropriations for Public Colleges			2	2	1		5
Graduate Placement		5	1	4	1	2	13
College Enrollment Predictions		2	3		2	1	8
College Administrative Costs	2				3	1	6
College Endowments				1	2	2	5
Miscellaneous	8	7	5	10	8	2	40
Total	14	15	13	19	19	9	89

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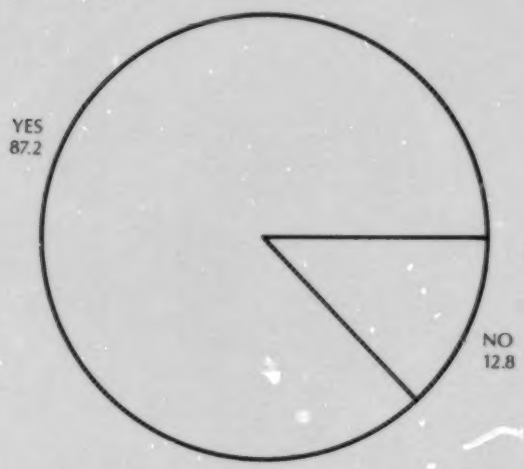
NEBHE 1984 Survey of New England Legislators
Table 7

State Level High Technology Morrill Act

Question: **At the national level, the High Technology Morrill Act proposes to establish a matching grants program to strengthen science, engineering and technology in our colleges and universities by providing "federal assistance for joint initiatives" of private industry, educational institutions and state governments. Would you support similar legislation in your own state?**

	Yes	No
CT (N = 103)	86.4%	13.6%
MA (N = 93)	93.5%	6.5%
RI (N = 75)	90.7%	9.3%
ME (N = 95)	90.5%	9.5%
NH (N = 166)	83.1%	16.9%
VT (N = 101)	83.2%	16.8%
Totals (N = 633)	87.2%	12.8%



Sum of percent grouped by category

NEBHE 1984 Survey of New England Legislators
Table 8

Communication Between Higher Education and Legislatures

Question: **Do you agree with the view that there is enough communication between New England's higher educational institutions and the region's legislators on how they can help each other?**

	Yes	No
CT (N = 116)	22.4%	77.6%
MA (N = 100)	22.0%	78.0%
RI (N = 80)	15.0%	85.0%
ME (N = 99)	20.2%	79.8%
NH (N = 174)	20.7%	79.3%
VT (N = 105)	41.0%	59.0%
Totals (N = 674)	23.6%	76.4%

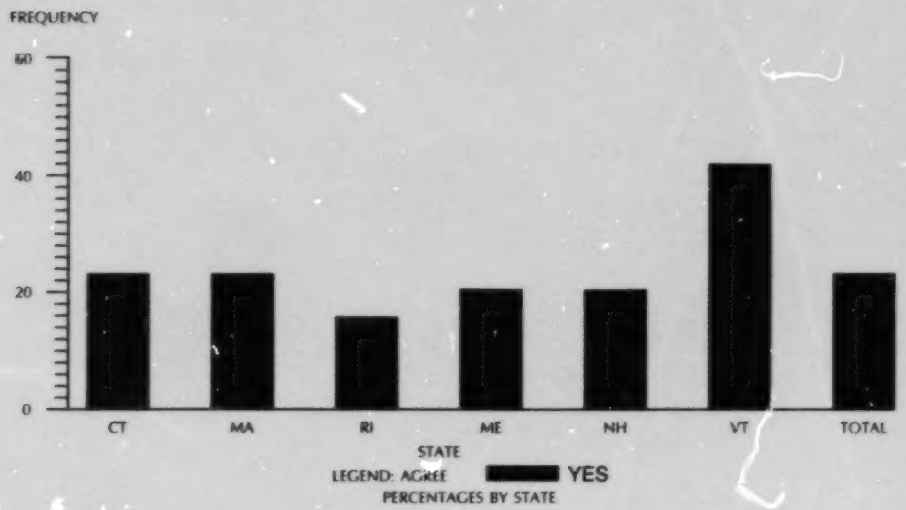


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Table 9

Contacts from Higher Education

Question: Have you been contacted by any representatives of New England's higher educational institutions to discuss how to use your respective resources to mutual advantage?

	Yes	No
CT (N = 117)	29.1%	71.9%
MA (N = 101)	43.6%	56.4%
RI (N = 82)	15.9%	84.1%
ME (N = 103)	27.2%	72.8%
NH (N = 174)	25.3%	74.7%
VT (N = 109)	41.3%	58.7%
Totals (N = 686)	30.3%	69.7%

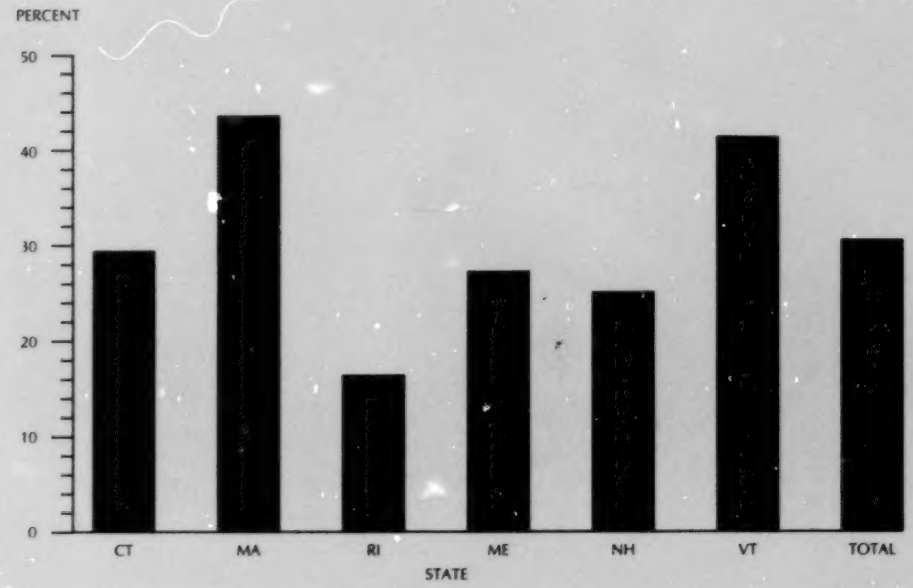

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Table 10

Legislators' Contacting of Higher Education

Question: **Have you taken the initiative and contacted any representatives of New England's higher educational institutions to discuss how to use your respective resources to mutual advantage?**

	Yes	No
CT (N = 118)	29.7%	70.3%
MA (N = 101)	46.5%	53.5%
RI (N = 82)	24.4%	75.6%
ME (N = 99)	25.4%	74.7%
NH (N = 173)	23.7%	76.3%
VT (N = 111)	20.7%	79.3%
Totals (N = 684)	27.9%	72.1%

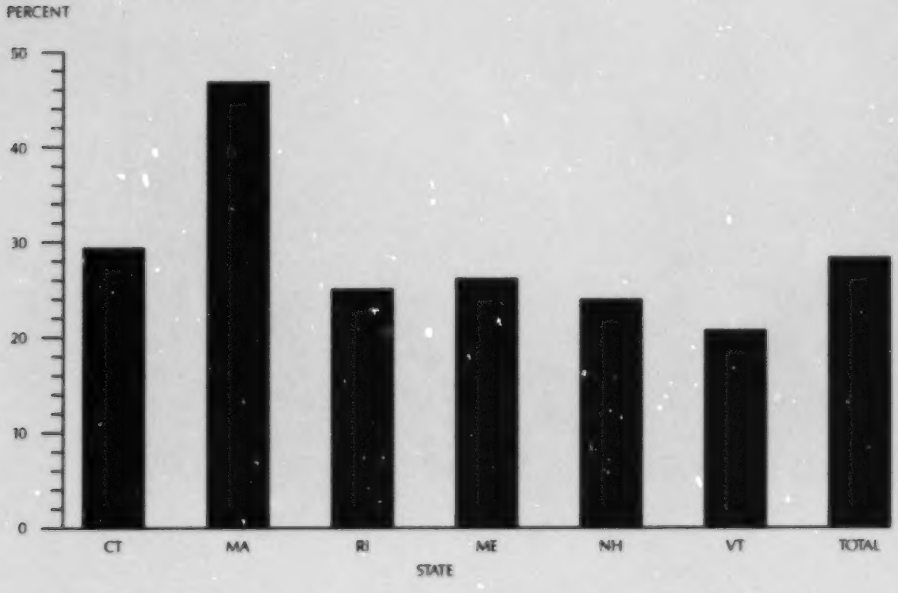

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Table 11

Increasing Funding for Higher Education

Question: If someone suggested increasing state funding for colleges and universities, what would be your response to the suggestion?

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
CT (N = 120)	28.3%	45.0%	15.0%	5.0%	6.7%
MA (N = 100)	29.0%	53.0%	11.0%	4.0%	3.0%
RI (N = 78)	34.6%	42.3%	15.4%	1.3%	6.4%
ME (N = 104)	28.8%	52.9%	9.6%	2.9%	5.8%
NH (N = 175)	44.6%	30.3%	13.1%	4.6%	7.4%
VT (N = 107)	13.1%	52.3%	20.6%	7.5%	6.5%
Totals (N = 684)	31.0%	44.4%	14.0%	4.4%	6.1%

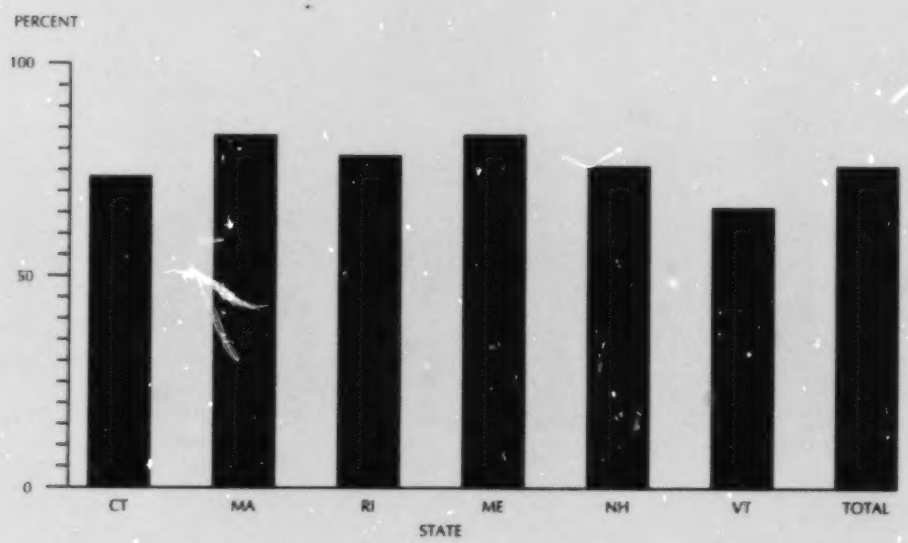

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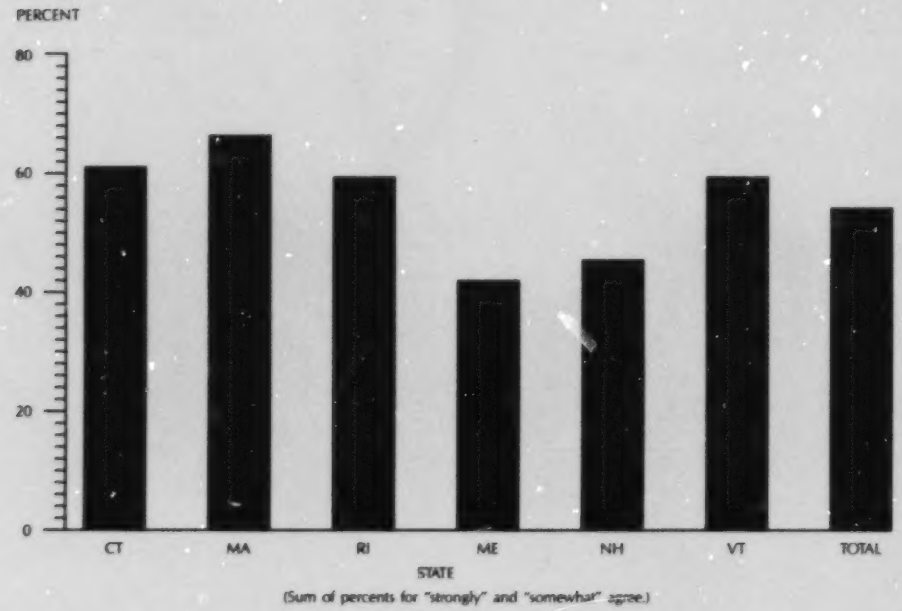
Table 12

Support for Scholarships to Private Institutions

Question: Do you think state government should provide scholarships to students attending private colleges and universities?

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
CT (N = 119)	19.3%	41.2%	22.7%	15.1%	1.7%
MA (N = 102)	28.4%	37.3%	13.7%	14.7%	5.9%
RI (N = 80)	25.0%	33.8%	22.5%	13.8%	5.0%
ME (N = 103)	7.8%	33.0%	27.2%	21.4%	10.7%
NH (N = 177)	15.8%	28.2%	22.6%	26.0%	7.3%
VT (N = 111)	33.3%	26.1%	23.4%	8.1%	9.0%
Totals (N = 692)	21.0%	32.8%	22.1%	17.5%	6.6%



(Sum of percents for "strongly" and "somewhat" agree.)

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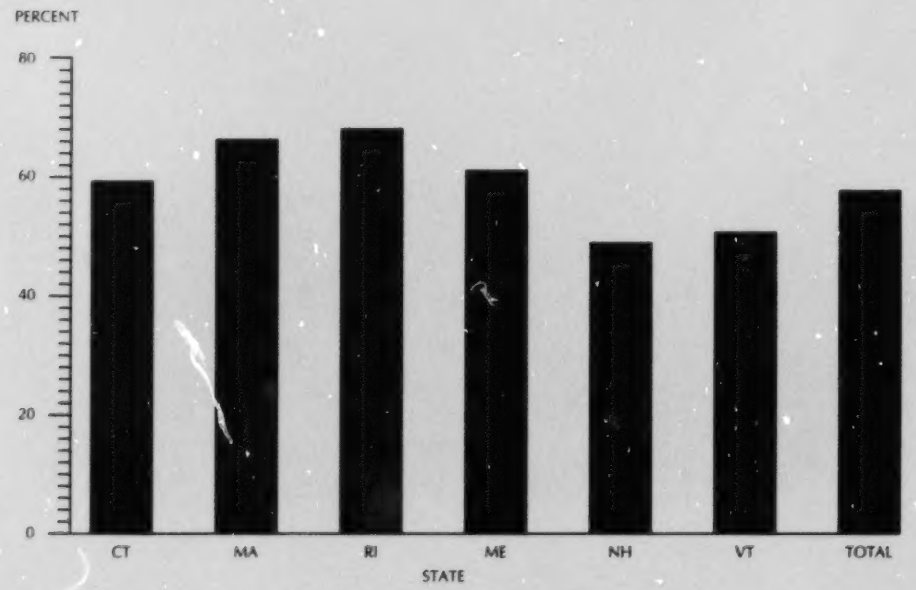
Table 13

Public Support for Research in Private Institutions

Question: Do you think state government should provide financial support for scientific and technological research at private colleges and universities?

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
CT (N = 119)	12.6%	47.1%	26.9%	10.9%	2.5%
MA (N = 101)	19.8%	46.5%	19.8%	7.9%	5.9%
RI (N = 82)	24.4%	42.7%	20.7%	8.5%	3.7%
ME (N = 104)	13.5%	47.1%	21.2%	10.6%	7.7%
NH (N = 177)	15.3%	33.3%	26.0%	15.8%	9.6%
VT (N = 110)	13.6%	37.3%	24.5%	13.6%	10.9%
Totals (N = 693)	16.0%	41.4%	23.7%	11.8%	7.1%



(Sum of percents for "strongly" and "somewhat" agree.)

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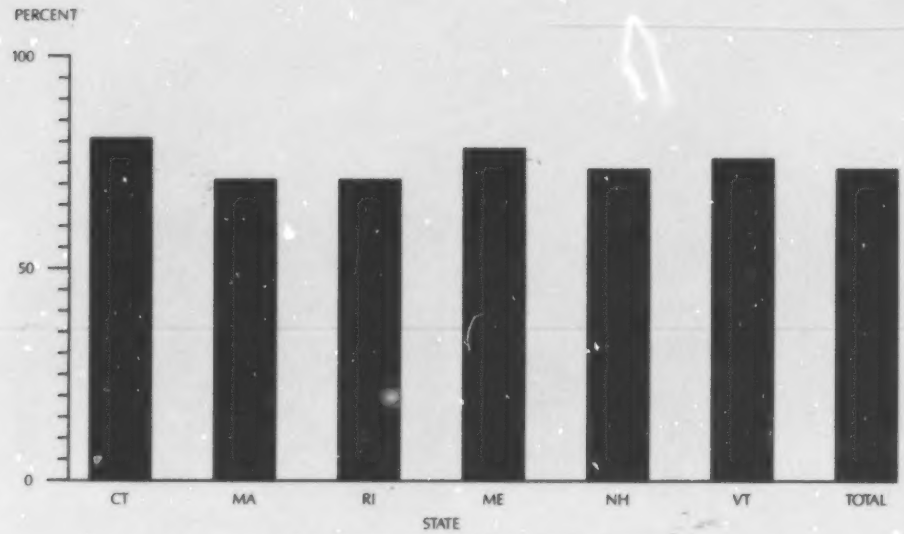
Table 14

Property Tax Exemption

Question: **Do you think colleges and universities in your state should be exempt from paying real property taxes on land they own that is used for educational purposes?**

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
CT (N = 116)	41.4%	40.5%	13.8%	2.6%	1.7%
MA (N = 103)	26.2%	43.7%	20.4%	4.9%	4.9%
RI (N = 82)	35.4%	34.1%	18.3%	12.2%	—
ME (N = 104)	47.1%	30.8%	13.5%	4.8%	3.8%
NH (N = 176)	50.0%	24.4%	14.8%	7.4%	3.4%
VT (N = 111)	38.7%	37.8%	12.6%	6.3%	4.5%
Totals (N = 692)	41.0%	34.2%	15.3%	6.2%	3.2%



(Sum of percents for "strongly" and "somewhat" agree.)

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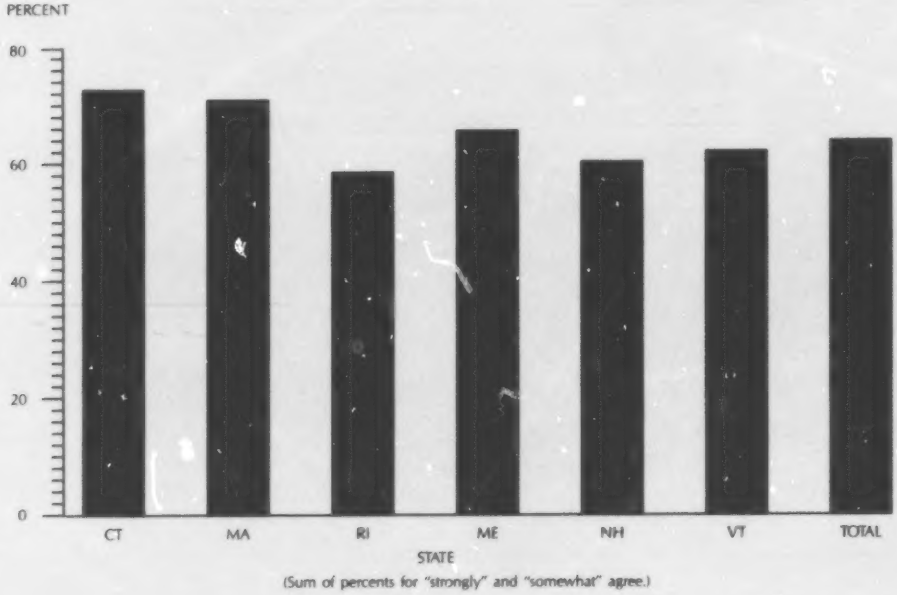
Table 15

Partial State Reimbursement for Property Tax Exemption

Question: **Some people feel that the property tax exemption is a well-deserved benefit for campuses, but that states may need to reimburse localities for part of the tax revenues lost. Do you agree with this view?**

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
CT (N = 120)	32.5%	40.0%	15.8%	9.2%	2.5%
MA (N = 100)	21.0%	49.0%	20.0%	6.0%	4.0%
RI (N = 82)	14.6%	43.9%	11.0%	28.0%	2.4%
ME (N = 104)	19.2%	46.2%	15.4%	15.4%	3.8%
NH (N = 178)	21.9%	37.6%	19.1%	16.9%	4.5%
VT (N = 111)	16.2%	45.0%	18.9%	16.2%	3.6%
Totals (N = 695)	21.4%	42.9%	17.1%	15.0%	3.6%



(Sum of percents for "strongly" and "somewhat" agree.)

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Table 16

Better Data from Academia

Question: "Government must be supplied with better data by academia if it is to judge the effectiveness with which higher education uses the tax revenues it receives." Do you agree with this statement?

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
CT (N = 119)	48.7%	42.0%	5.0%	.8%	3.4%
MA (N = 101)	49.5%	43.6%	3.0%	—	4.0%
RI (N = 83)	66.3%	20.5%	3.6%	4.8%	4.8%
ME (N = 103)	50.5%	39.8%	7.8%	—	1.9%
NH (N = 179)	55.3%	31.8%	8.4%	2.8%	1.7%
VT (N = 109)	50.5%	37.6%	3.7%	2.8%	5.5%
Totals (N = 694)	53.2%	36.0%	5.6%	1.9%	3.3%

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Table 17

Preferred Modes of Studying Higher Education

Question: In your view, which of the following is most helpful to you in making decisions about funding higher education? (Please rank in order of priority, 1 = most helpful and 5 = least helpful.)

a. Visits to college campuses initiated by college officials that provide a tour of the facilities and information about programs
b. Oral testimony by college officials before legislative committees
c. A visual presentation highlighting the main points of testimony
d. Data demonstrating the application of college resources to further economic development in your state
e. Annual data demonstrating proficiency in student learning
f. Other

	Median Rank*				
Median Rank of:	**Visits to Campuses**	**Oral Testimony**	**Visual Presentation**	**Data Re Economic Development**	**Data Re Student Proficiency**
CT (N = 117)	2.7	3.5	3.4	1.9	2.4
MA (N = 92)	3.3	3.1	3.9	1.5	2.2
RI (N = 81)	2.6	3.2	3.5	2.2	2.2
ME (N = 100)	3.2	3.0	3.4	1.7	2.5
NH (N = 161)	2.3	2.6	3.2	2.3	2.9
VT (N = 105)	2.5	2.8	3.4	2.2	3.2
Totals (N = 656)	2.7	3.0	3.4	1.9	2.5
Overall Ranking	3	4	5	1	2

*Within each category half the respondents indicated a higher ranking than the one reported here and half indicated a lower ranking.

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Table 17A

Tabulation of responses to "Other" in Question No. 17

	CT	MA	RI	ME	NH	VT	Total
Impact on budget	3		1	3	2		9
General Knowledge	1		2			1	4
Input from Students	1		1	1	1	3	7
Data on Student Activity after Graduation		2	1	1	2	2	8
Miscellaneous	6	4	4	7	6	2	29
Totals	11	6	9	12	11	8	57

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Table 18

Influences in Decision Making

Question: What influences do you take into account most in making decisions in the funding of higher education? (Please rank in order of importance, 1 = most important and 5 = least important.)

	Median Rank*				
Median Ranking for:	Governor	Legislative Leadership	Committee Chair	Legislative Colleagues	Constituents
CT (N = 115)	4.4	3.5	2.7	2.5	1.8
MA (N = 94)	3.3	3.3	2.2	2.7	1.9
RI (N = 77)	3.4	1.9	3.4	2.8	1.8
ME (N = 102	3.5	3.2	3.2	2.4	1.8
NH (N = 156)	4.2	3.1	2.2	2.4	1.8
VT (N = 106)	3.7	3.6	2.8	2.6	1.6
Totals (N = 650)	3.7	3.2	2.8	2.5	1.8
Overall Ranking	5	4	3	2	1

*Within each category half the respondents indicated a higher ranking than the one reported here and half indicated a lower ranking.

NEBHE 1984 Survey of New England Legislators
Table 18A

Tabulation of responses to "Other" in Question No. 18

	CT	MA	RI	ME	NH	VT	Total
Personal Opinions/Experience	3	5	8	6	9	8	39
College People	1	2	4	1	6	4	18
Needs of Students	4		3		8	2	17
Budget/Costs	2		2		2	1	7
Available Funds	2			1	3	2	8
Analysis of Data	1	1	1	2	3	3	11
Committees				4	2		6
Miscellaneous	6	4	2	8	2	3	25
Totals	19	12	20	22	35	23	131

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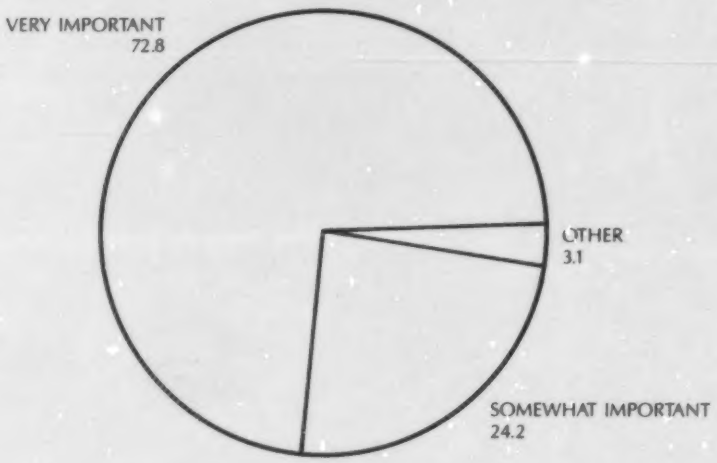
NEBHE 1984 Survey of New England Legislators
Table 19

Importance of Retraining Programs

Question: What importance would you assign to the need for retraining programs for workers with obsolete skills in your state?

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Somewhat Unimportant	Very Unimportant	Don't Know
CT (N = 120)	71.7%	25.0%	.8%	2.5%	—
MA (N = 102)	74.5%	25.5%	—	—	—
RI (N = 82)	84.1%	13.4%	2.4%	—	—
ME (N = 105)	61.9%	33.3%	3.8%	—	1.0%
NH (N = 176)	74.4%	27.2%	2.8%	—	.6%
VT (N = 110)	71.8%	24.5%	2.7%	.9%	—
Totals (N = 695)	72.8%	24.2%	2.2%	.6%	.3%



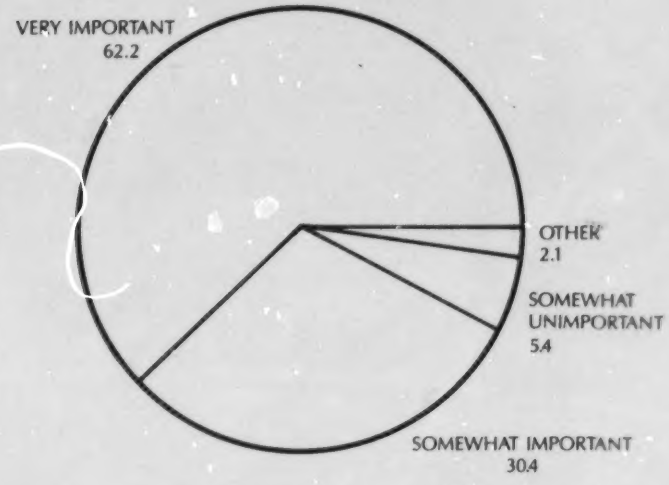
Sum of percent grouped by category

NEBHE 1984 Survey of New England Legislators
Table 20

Higher Education and Retraining

Question: How important do you think it is that institutions of higher education in your state directly assist in retraining workers for occupational skills that will be in demand by industry?

	Very Important	Somewhat Important	Somewhat Unimportant	Very Unimportant	Don't Know
CT (N = 117)	53.0%	36.8%	7.7%	1.7%	.9%
MA (N = 101)	65.3%	29.7%	5.0%	—	—
RI (N = 81)	67.9%	23.5%	4.9%	2.5%	1.2%
ME (N = 105)	61.0%	29.5%	8.6%	—	1.0%
NH (N = 177)	66.1%	28.2%	4.0%	1.7%	—
VT (N = 109)	59.6%	33.9%	2.8%	.9%	2.8%
Totals (N = 690)	62.2%	30.4%	5.4%	1.2%	.9%



Sum of percent grouped by category

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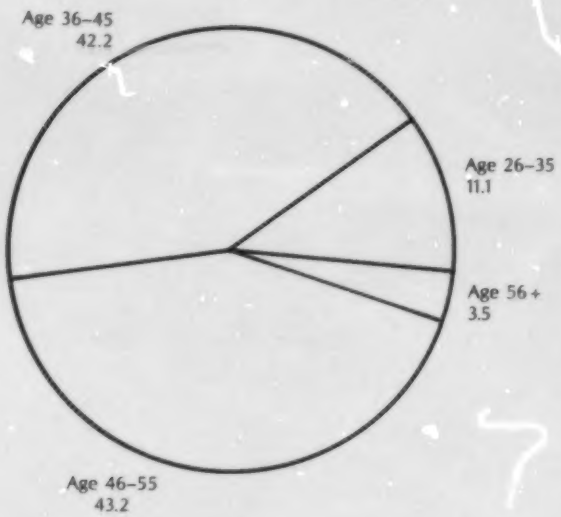
Table 21

Age and Retraining

Question: In your opinion, which age group most needs retraining programs?

Age:	26–35	36–45	46–55	56+
CT (N=106)	8.5%	27.4%	61.3%	2.8%
MA (N=90)	8.9%	42.2%	46.7%	2.2%
RI (N=76)	5.3%	48.7%	40.8%	5.3%
ME (N=94)	10.6%	47.9%	37.2%	4.3%
NH (N=144)	15.3%	45.1%	36.1%	3.5%
VT (N=96)	14.6%	43.8%	38.5%	3.1%
Totals (N=606)	11.1%	42.2%	43.2%	3.5%



Sum of percent grouped by category

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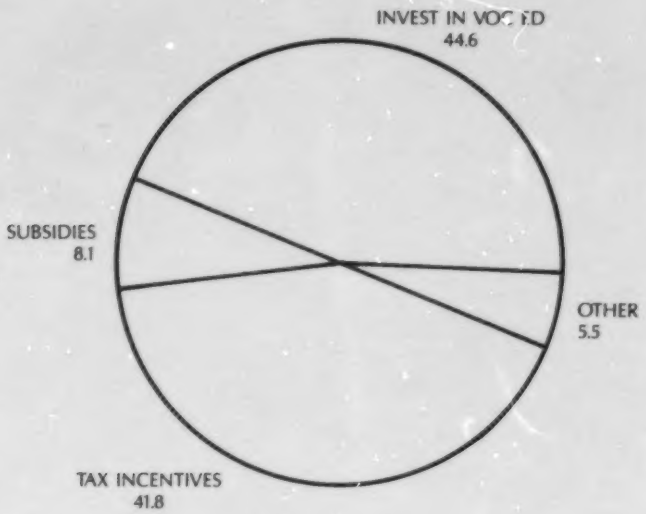
Table 22

Method of Financing Retraining

Question: What do you think is the most cost effective way to finance job retraining?

	Invest in Voc Ed	Subsidies to Individuals	Tax Incentives	Other
CT (N = 112)	29.5%	9.8%	53.6%	7.1%
MA (N = 89)	30.3%	13.5%	49.4%	6.7%
RI (N = 78)	38.5%	9.0%	43.6%	9.0%
ME (N = 98)	62.2%	5.1%	27.6%	5.1%
NH (N = 162)	56.8%	7.4%	32.7%	3.1%
VT (N = 100)	42.0%	5.0%	49.0%	4.0%
Totals (N = 639)	44.6%	8.1%	41.8%	5.5%



Sum of percent grouped by category

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NEBHE 1984 Survey of New England Legislators
Table 22A

Tabulation of responses to "Other" in Question No. 22

	CT	MA	RI	ME	NH	VT	Total
Split Cost (Government and Industry		1	1		5	2	9
Individual Payment	3	1					4
Combination of all answers	1	2		1	2		6
Miscellaneous	3	4	8	2	6	3	26
Totals	7	8	9	3	13	5	45

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Table 23

Sources of Information on Retraining Needs

Question: What sources do you rely on for information concerning job retraining needs?

	Committee Staff	Organized Labor	Newspapers Magazines	TV	Government Bureaus	Other
CT (N = 120)	45.0%	48.3%	55.0%	15.0%	70.8%	18.3%
MA (N = 104)	37.7%	48.1%	47.1%	17.3%	72.1%	9.6%
RI (N = 83)	24.1%	38.6%	59.0%	26.5%	60.2%	8.4%
ME (N = 105)	42.9%	42.9%	61.9%	34.3%	57.1%	23.8%
NH (N = 181)	38.7%	35.9%	58.0%	24.3%	58.6%	16.6%
VT (N = 112)	37.5%	26.8%	61.6%	36.6%	59.8%	9.8%
Totals (N = 705)	41.3%	39.7%	57.2%	25.4%	62.8%	14.9%

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NEBHE 1984 Survey of New England Legislators
Table 23A

Tabulation of responses to "Other" in Question No. 23

	CT	MA	RI	ME	NH	VT	Total
Industry	14	2	1	7	9	3	36
Personal Opinion	4	1	2	4	3	2	16
Constituents	3	1	1	2	8	1	16
Local Goverment Officials		3	1		4		8
JTPA Officials		2		2			4
Miscellaneous	6	2	5	6	13	4	36
Totals	27	11	10	21	37	10	116

NEBHE 1984 Survey of New England Legislators
Table 24

Awareness of Model Legislation in Retraining

Question: Are you aware of any model legislation for retraining programs?

	Yes	No
CT (N = 106)	15.1%	84.9%
MA (N = 98)	25.5%	74.5%
RI (N = 77)	14.3%	85.7%
ME (N = 100)	20.0%	80.0%
NH (N = 167)	12.6%	87.4%
VT (N = 108)	5.6%	94.4%
Totals (N = 650)	15.1%	84.9%

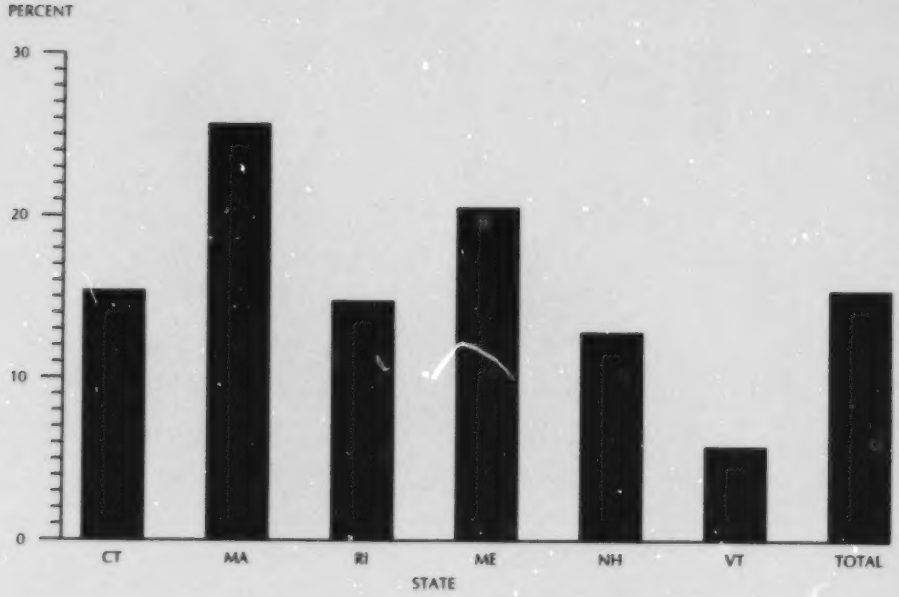

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Table 25

Coordinated System for Retraining in New England

Question: Would you support a coordinated system for labor retraining in New England?

	Yes	No
CT (N = 105)	89.5%	10.5%
MA (N = 93)	93.5%	6.5%
RI (N = 78)	91.0%	9.0%
ME (N = 77)	90.9%	9.1%
NH (N = 158)	90.5%	9.5%
VT (N = 98)	83.7%	16.3%
Totals (N = 609)	89.8%	10.2%

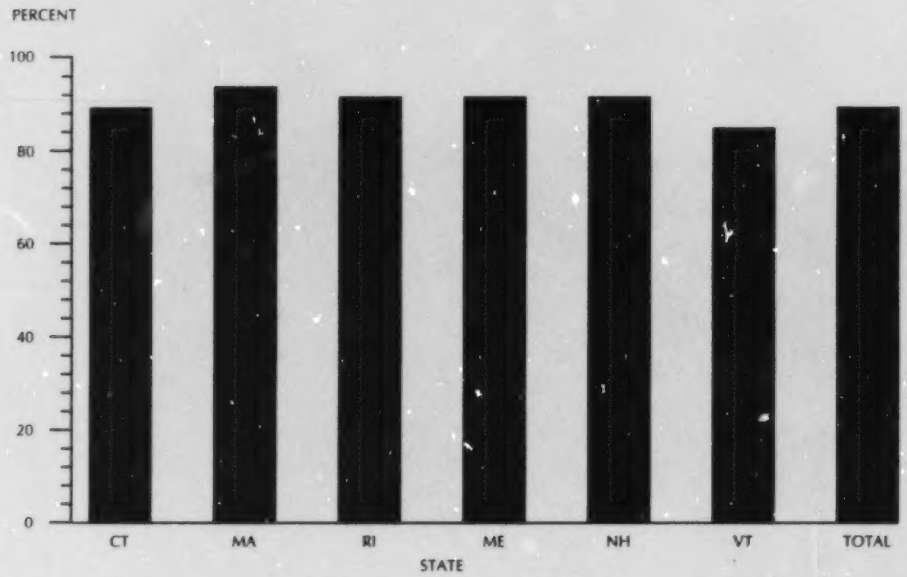

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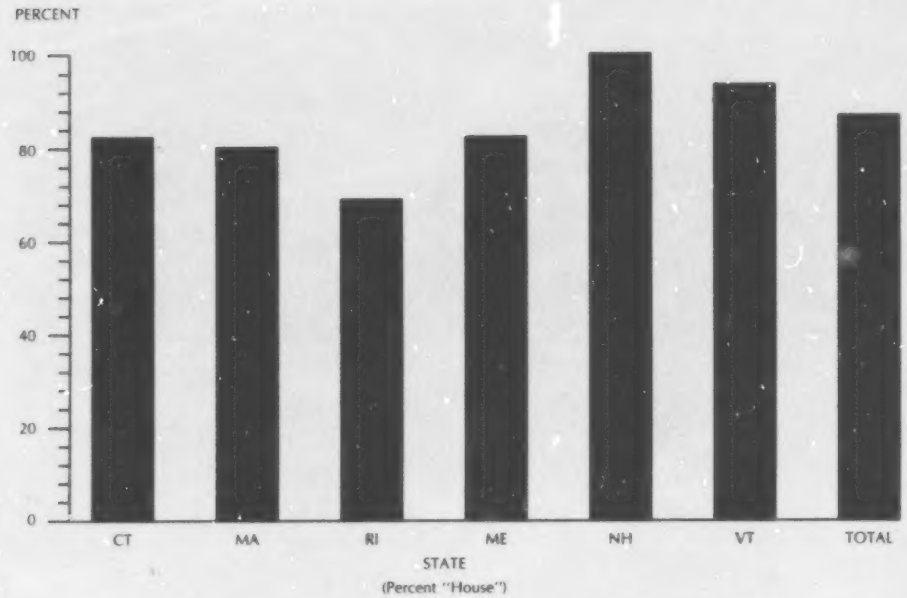
Table 26

Respondents' Affiliation

Question: In which chamber of the legislature do you serve?

	House	Senate
CT (N = 118)	81.4%	18.6%
MA (N = 101)	80.2%	19.8%
RI (N = 83)	67.5%	32.5%
ME (N = 104)	80.8%	19.2%
NH (N = 178)	98.9%	1.1%
VT (N = 108)	91.7%	8.3%
Totals (N = 692)	85.5%	14.5%

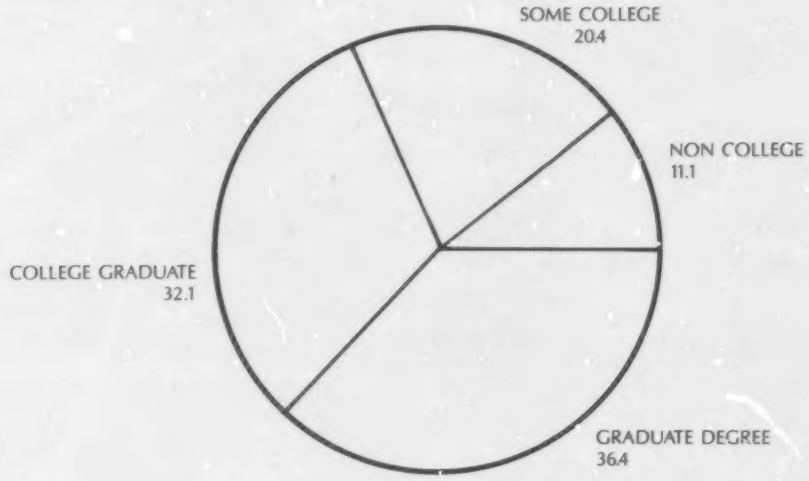


NEBHE 1984 Survey of New England Legislators
Table 27

Respondents' Level of Schooling

Question: Indicate the highest level of schooling which you have completed.

	Non College	Some College	College Graduate	Graduate Degree
CT (N = 119)	5.9%	16.8%	36.1%	41.2%
MA (N = 100)	8.0%	15.0%	24.0%	53.0%
RI (N = 82)	4.9%	18.3%	18.3%	58.5%
ME (N = 105)	12.4%	26.7%	35.2%	25.7%
NH (N = 177)	13.0%	24.9%	35.6%	26.6%
VT (N = 109)	20.2%	17.4%	36.7%	25.7%
Totals (N = 692)	11.1%	20.4%	32.1%	36.4%



Sum of percent grouped by category

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NEBHE 1984 Survey of New England Legislators

Summary of General Comments

	CT	MA	RI	ME	NH	VT	Total
Good questionnaire—good luck	1	3	3	3	4	3	17
Poor questionnaire	4	1	1	1	1	3	11
Need more info about and coordination with secondary ed—(Don't have colleges do work of secondary schools)		1	6	3	2	2	13
Only the small specialized state tech schools appropriate for retraining of workers	1		1	1	1	1	5
Only industry & Labor can really retrain work force (in place) (Gov't. should not attempt to manage the retraining)			1	4	3	3	11
Gov't should function only as catalyst between education & industry			1	1	2	1	5
Gov't & ed need better communication			1		4		5
Retraining a *personal* responsibility	2		1		1		4
Don't give higher ed more money without better cost controls	1	2	3	1	1	1	9
Regional use of training facilities including high schools (less duplication)	3			1		2	6
Need for better manpower counseling			3	1	1		5

NEBHE 1984 Survey of New England Legislators

Other comments include the following:

1. Video retraining courses for home or public libraries
2. Better agreement between labor and management needed on retraining
3. Business, not government should pay for retraining
4. Need for region-wide data base on training and retraining
5. Use universities as a resource for manpower information
6. Design retraining so as to attract new industry
7. Generate better business climate to retain present jobs
8. Keep politics out of funding for higher ed
9. Fund the essentials not the frills
10. Basic skills (including reading and writing) more important than job-specific ones
11. More in-state coordination needed probably from state universities
12. Don't retrain the unemployed for non-existent jobs
13. Need for new tax structure and new tax incentives
14. Private colleges need public support
15. Private colleges don't need public support

APPENDICES

Appendix 1

Response to question: "What importance does your institution assign to the need for retraining programs for *workers* with obsolete vocational skills in the community which you serve? (Circle *one* letter.)

	Public		Private	
Institutions	**2 Yr**	**4 Yr**	**2 Yr**	**4 Yr**
Very Important	13	5	5	8
Somewhat Important	7	6	7	10
Somewhat Unimportant	—	1	—	6
Very Unimportant	—	—	1	3
Not Applicable	1	3	1	24
Total	21	15	14	51

Source: NEBHE 1984 Survey of Directors of Continuing Education

Appendix 2

Composite Age Distribution of Participants in Retraining Programs at 56 New England Institutions of Higher Education

Age	
25 or below	14%
26–35	39%
36–45	35%
46–55	10%
56 or above	2%

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Appendix 3

Total Population for U.S. and New England States, 1979 to 2000

	Growth Rate (Percent)		
	1970–80	1980–90	1990–2000
Total U.S.	11.4%	11.2%	8.7%
New England	4.2	6.4	4.4
Connecticut	2.5	1.4	−1.1
Massachusetts	0.8	2.1	0.3
Rhode Island	−0.3	2.9	−0.2
Maine	13.2	17.4	13.9
New Hampshire	24.8	24.4	28.5
Vermont	14.8	20.7	16.9

Source: George Masnick and John Pitkin, "The Changing Population of States and Regions," (Cambridge, Mass: The Joint Center for Urban Studies, August 1982).

Appendix 4

Pattern of Projected High School Graduates 1981–2000: Percentage Change from 1981

	1986	1988	1992	1999
United States	−14	−10	−22	− 9
Connecticut	−18	−17	−39	−31
Massachusetts	−17	−18	−42	−35
Rhode Island	−21	−19	−41	−31
Maine	−16	−13	−30	−22
New Hampshire	−12	− 7	−32	−19
Vermont	−11	− 3	−22	− 5

Source: High School Graduates: Projections for the Fifty States (1982–2000) by William R. McConnell, Norman Kaufman, Boulder, Colorado: 1984, Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education

NEBHE 1984 Survey of New England State Legislators

The 1984 Survey of New England State Legislators reflects certain common interests of NEBHE, the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) and the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL). FIPSE has provided a three-year grant to NEBHE for a series of legislative briefings, state seminars and special publications designed to help legislators define the role of higher education in the development of the new "high tech" economy of New England. The NCSL has supported NEBHE's effort to collect and disseminate information bearing specifically on the retraining of New England's mid-career work force. The legislative survey thus includes general items of common concern to government, industry and higher education as well as items focused specifically on the retraining of New England's work force.

It is noteworthy that of 1323 legislators surveyed over 50% responded, an achievement that is nothing short of remarkable for such a large group not noted for its responsiveness to surveys. The rates of return by state were as follows:

	Total Number	Number Responding	Percentage
CT	187	120	64.2%
MA	200	104	52.0%
RI	150	83	55.3%
ME	184	105	57.1%
NH	424	181	42.7%
VT	178	112	62.9%
Total	1323	705	53.3%

The high level of regional response to an educational survey is unprecedented and renders even more impressive the suprising degree of unanimity of some of the reported opinions.

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- Legislators are nearly (98%) unanimous in believing that higher education is either very important or fairly important to the New England economy (Table 1), and 85.5% agree (Table 2) that higher education itself is an important industry. They also agree (97%) that there is an important need for the retraining of workers with obsolete skills in their respective states (Table 19) and that it is important (92.6%) that institutions of higher education assist in this retraining (Table 20).

- In these respects they reflect the views of the general public in New England as well as in other regions of the country. (A 1983 poll of the general public co-sponsored by NEBHE and carried out by Group Attitudes Corp. of New York City indicated that 91% of New England residents and 87% of the U.S. population as a whole feel that it is important that the resources of colleges and universities be applied to economic growth in their state.)

- Only 65% of legislators rate the quality of higher education in the U.S. as good or excellent (Table 3a). Over 90% give these same positive ratings to New England institutions, however (Table 3b). Ratings of "excellent" for their own states' colleges and universities range from 16.8% for Maine to 60.8% for Massachusetts.

- New England colleges and universities are rated as doing a generally good (54.8%) or excellent (11.4%) job of meeting the labor force needs of private industries in the region. This 66% total compares with a 47% favorable response to essentially the same question in a 1980 survey. Apparently higher education has begun to respond and legislators recognize that fact.

- Legislators overwhelmingly (91.5%) favor tax incentives for corporate contributions to higher education (Table 5) and they strongly (87.2%) favor a

state level "High Technology Morrill Act" involving matching grant programs to strengthen science and engineering in colleges and universities (Table 7). Not suprisingly a good majority (75%) favor exempting colleges and universities from local property taxes (Table 14), but more surprisingly a majority (64%) also favors state reimbursements for at least part of the local revenue thus lost (Table 15).

- A majority of legislators (54%) favors providing state scholarships to students attending private colleges although positive responses vary from 41% in Maine to 66% in Massachusetts (Table 12). A majority (57%) also favors state support for scientific and technological research at private colleges and universities with positive responses varying from 49% in New Hampshire to 67% in Rhode Island.

- In response to a general question about increasing state funding for colleges and universities seventy-five percent indicate a positive disposition with affirmative responses varying from 65% in Vermont to 82% in Maine (Table 11).

- When asked if there is enough communication between leaders in higher education and legislators only 24% of the latter responded affirmatively, a figure almost identical to that obtained in a 1980 survey (Table 8). Percentages of positive response varied from a low of 15% in Rhode Island to a high of 41% in Vermont. Only 30% of all legislators reported having been approached by a representative of higher education (Table 9) and only 28% of legislators reported taking the initiative in approaching college or university officials in matters of mutual concern (Table 10).

• A large majority (89%) of legislators agreed that "government must be supplied with better data by academia if it is to judge the effectiveness with which higher educaton uses the tax revenues it receives" (Table 16). The kinds of information that legislators would like to receive (ranked in order of helpfulness) are 1) data showing the impact of college resources on state economic development; 2) data demonstrating student proficiency; 3) information from actual visits to campuses; 4) oral testimony from college officials and 5) visual presentations highlighting such presentations (Table 17). Most important influences on decision making about the funding of higher education were ranked as follows: 1) constituents; 2) legislative colleagues; 3) committee chairpersons; 4) legislative leaders and 5) the governor (Table 18).

• On the issue of retraining of workers almost half of all legislators indicated that the greatest needs for retraining were in the age groups above forty-five. Legislators were about equally divided in their preferences for the financing of retraining between offering tax incentives to industry (41.8%) and direct state investment in vocational educational programs (44.6%) with only 8.1% preferring subsidies to individuals (Table 22). Preferred sources of information about retraining needs were (in order) 1) government agencies, 2) the print media, 3) committee staff, 4) organized labor, and 5) television (Table 23).

• Only 15% of legislators reported being aware of model legislation for retraining programs but a surprising 89.8% indicated that they would support a coordinated regional system for labor retraining in New England. Such unanimity may be less surprising when it is compared with the response of a sample of the New England public (1983 Group Attitudes Corporation Survey) to a question about their reactions to the idea of interstate cooperation in

academic program offerings. Seventy-nine percent of New Englanders favored such cooperation as compared to sixty-eight percent in the national sample.

The survey questionnaire asked respondents about their own educational backgrounds (Table 28). Roughly two-thirds of the legislators were college graduates and one-third were not. Responses to each question of the survey were tallied against educational level of the respondent. Responses of college graduates were almost identical with those of non-college graduates on all questions but two. Legislators who had not graduated from college held a higher opinion of the quality of higher education than those who had graduated, but ironically, were somewhat less inclined to increase funding for it.

The overwhelming agreement among legislators that higher education should participate directly in the retraining of workers is not matched among all areas of higher education. A 1984 NEBHE survey of the directors of continuing education in the 257 chartered institutions of higher education in New England produced the 101 responses reported in Appendix A-1. While virtually all the respondents from two-year colleges (public and private) and most of the respondents from four-year public colleges saw retraining as somewhat or very important, more than half the respondents from private four-year colleges felt that retraining programs were either unimportant or not applicable to them. These latter institutions tend to see themselves as educators of managers and other professionals rather than as trainers or re-trainers of workers. Some of the legislators responding to this questionnaire have cautioned (see summary following Table 28) that business, not government or higher education, should be managing the effort at retraining and that high schools and vocational technical junior colleges not four-year colleges are the appropriate locus for the retraining.

Yet the facts are that the population of the southern tier of the New England states, at least, is aging more rapidly and growing more slowly (See

Appendix A-2 and A-3) than that of the country as a whole and will be experiencing a dramatically greater decline in the number of high school graduates from now to the end of the century. If a revolution in high technology is to be carried out it will have to be carried out in substantial part by present members of the work force. We cannot build our new industrial revolution with the hands and minds of the next generation alone, there simply will not be enough of them.

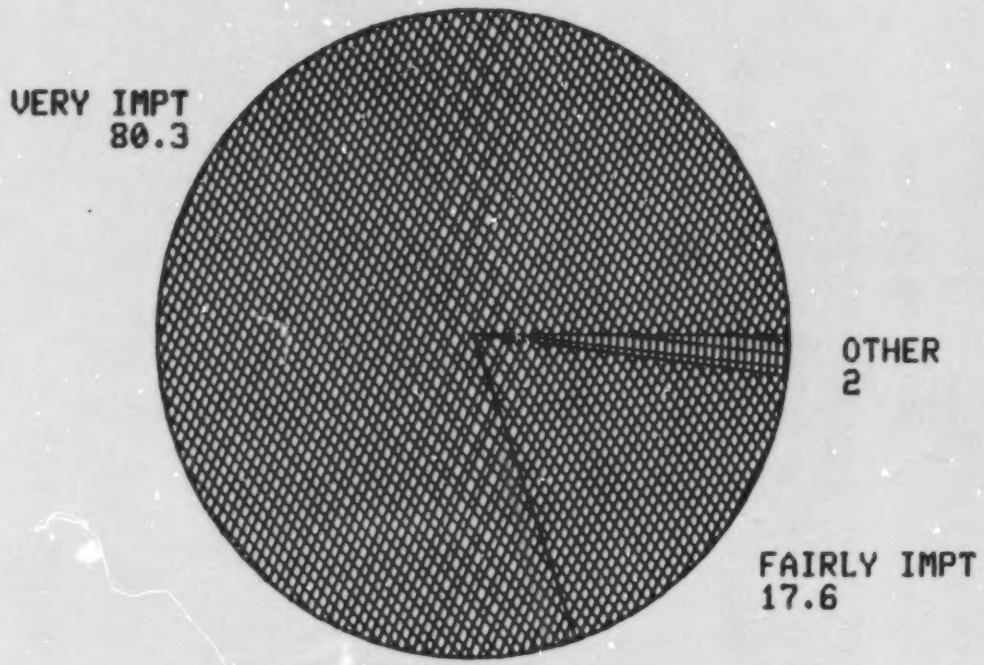
So the issue of retraining <u>is</u> a live one and higher education and government <u>are</u> already involved. Of thirty-six public colleges responding to the survey noted above twenty-seven reported operating one or more retraining programs while twenty-nine of the sixty-five private colleges responding reported one or more such programs. Several educators suggested that the mid-career worker needed a thoughtful consideration of the historical context of the high tech revolution and its potential purposes, good and bad, not merely mastery of its technical skills. Business itself has suggested that the skills most desired in new employees are the ability to read with understanding and to think and write with clarity. Optimal curricula for re-training are obviously still evolving.

What, then, in summary, emerges from this legislative survey? New England legislators, like members of the general public in New England, see their colleges and universities as vital to the economic development of the region. They rate their quality as good or excellent but their response to retraining needs as less good though improving. They are favorably disposed to direct aid to higher education or special incentives to industry to move retraining programs forward, but they feel strongly the need for better communication among government, higher education and business and better information about retraining needs, retraining programs and model legislation on retraining. They are strongly disposed to regional collaboration on retraining programs.

Reading between the lines of the questionnaire one senses a strong, positive, if not totally uncritical attitude of good will toward both higher education and business. One senses an earnest desire for better communication among the sectors of government, business and education and for better interchange of good information about educational and training needs and opportunities. But beyond all this one senses a regional loyalty and an enthusiasm for regional economic and educational development. The public, the legislators, higher education and business all seem ready to pitch in if programs are appropriate for each of the parties concerned. Is not now the time to take advantage of common concern and mutual respect?

IMPORTANCE OF HIGHER EDUCATION TO THE ECONOMY

SUM OF PERCENT GROUPED BY CATEGORY



Question: How important do you think New England's institutions of higher learning are to the economy of the region?

NEBHE 1984 Survey of New England Legislators (N=697): TABLE 1

NEBHE 1984 Survey of New England Legislators

Table 1

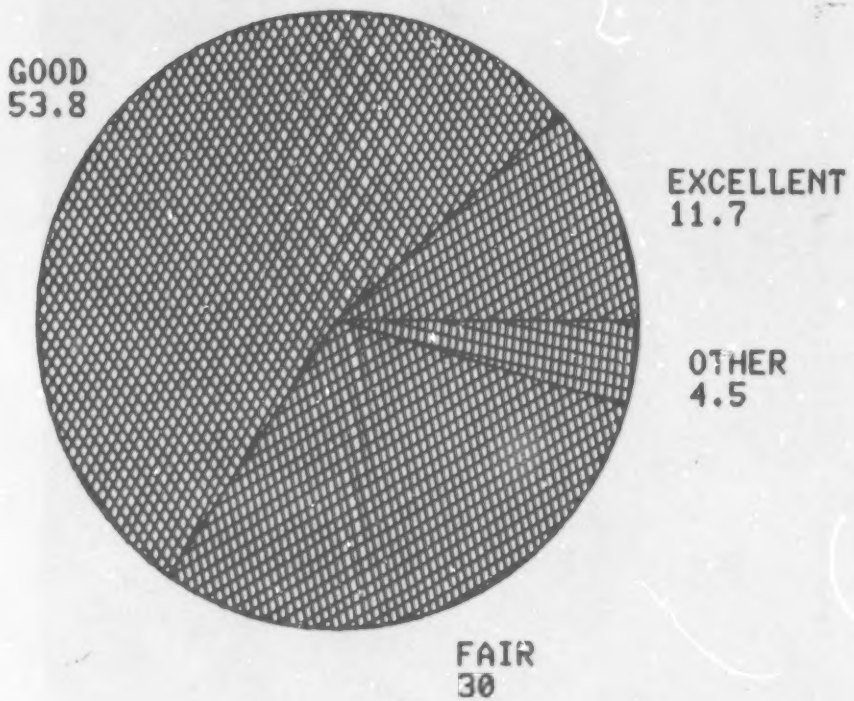
Importance of Higher Education to the Economy

Question: How important do you think New England's institutions of higher learning are to the economy of the region?

	Very Important	Fairly Important	Not too Important	Not Important at all	Don't Know
CT (N=120)	65.8%	30.0%	3.3%	-	.8%
MA (N=103)	85.4%	14.6%	-	-	-
RI (N=82)	75.6%	20.7%	2.4%	-	1.2%
ME (N=105)	78.1%	20.0%	1.9%	-	-
NH (N=178)	87.1%	11.8%	1.1%	-	-
VT (N=109)	86.2%	11.9%	1.8%	-	-
Totals(N=697)	80.3%	17.6%	1.7%	-	.3%

'ALITY OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN THE U.S.

SUM OF PERCENT GROUPED BY CATEGORY



Question: What is your personal impression of the overall quality of a college or university education in the U.S.?

NEBHE 1984 Survey of New England Legislators (N=690): TABLE 3A

NEBHE 1984 Survey of New England Legislators

Table 3A

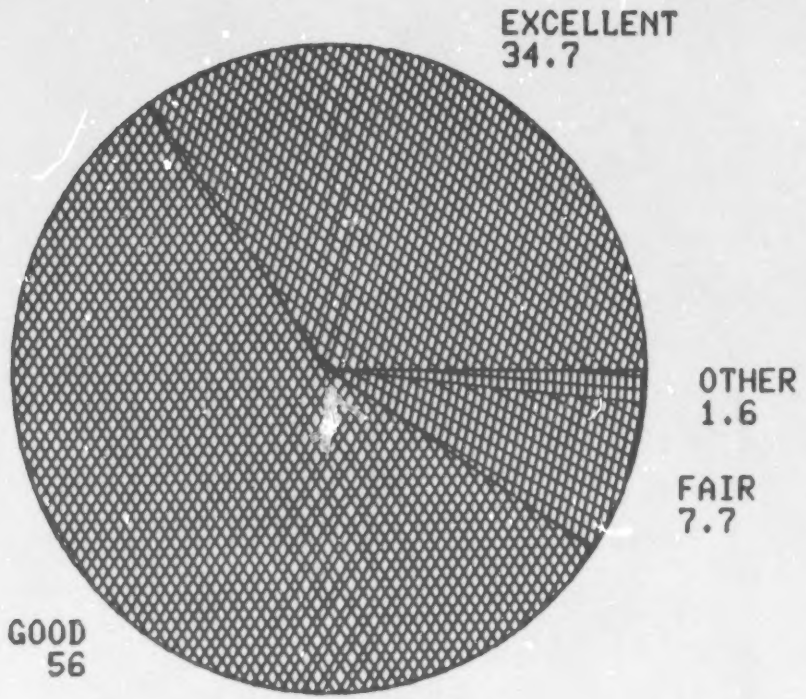
Quality of Higher Education in the U.S.

Question: What is your personal impression of the overall quality of a college or university education in the U.S.?

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Don't Know
CT (N=119)	7.6%	51.3%	36.1%	-	5.0%
MA (N=102)	10.7%	57.3%	30.1%	1.0%	1.0%
RI (N=83)	15.7%	57.8%	24.1%	-	2.4%
ME (N=104)	10.6%	54.8%	30.8%	-	3.8%
NH (N=173)	15.6%	47.4%	30.1%	2.9%	4.0%
VT (N=108)	9.3%	59.3%	26.9%	1.9%	2.8%
Totals (N=690)	11.7%	53.8%	30.0%	1.2%	3.3%

QUALITY OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN NEW ENGLAND

SUM OF PERCENT GROUPED BY CATEGORY



Question: What is your personal impression of the overall quality of a college or university education in New England?

NEBHE 1984 Survey of New England Legislators (N=686): TABLE 3B

NEBHE 1984 Survey of New England Legislators

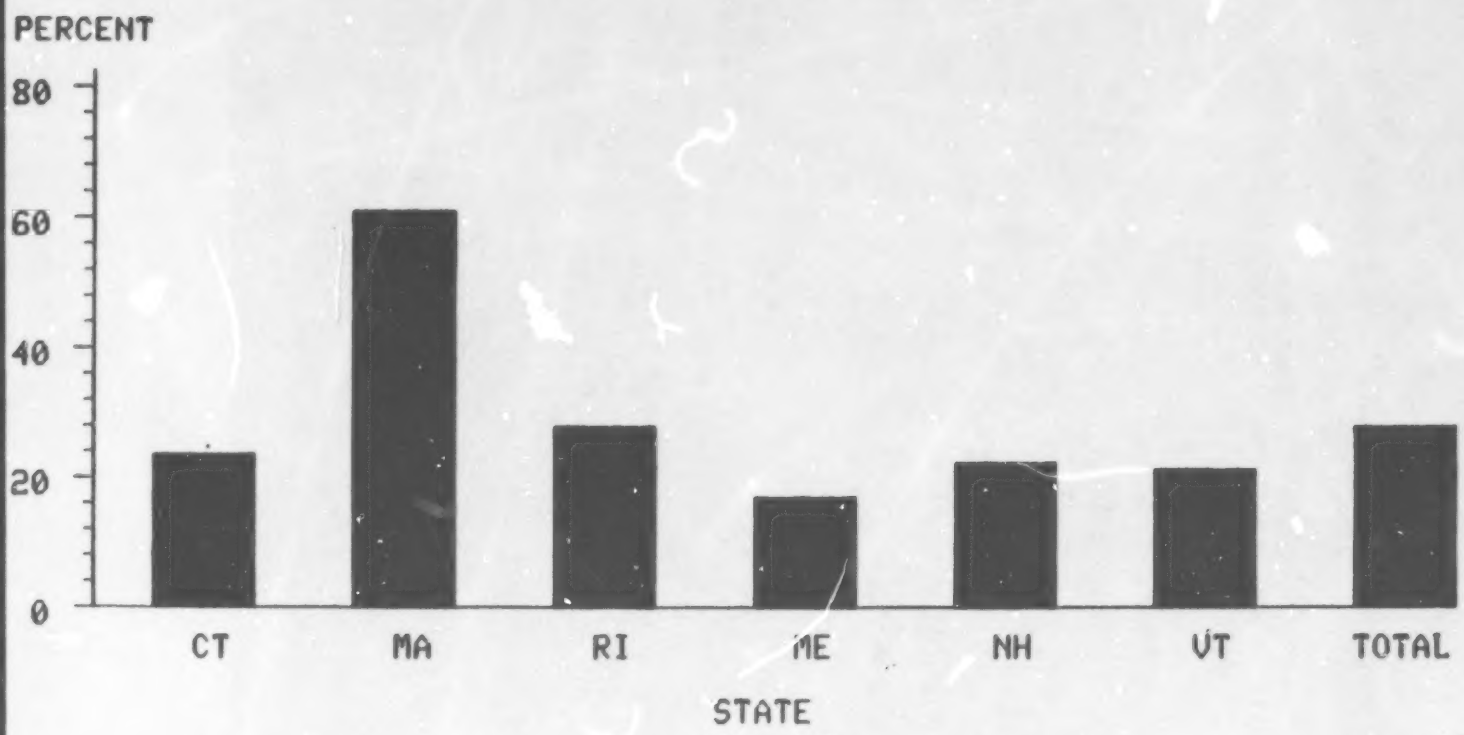
Table 3B

Quality of Higher Education in New England

Question: What is your personal impression of the overall quality of a college or university education in New England?

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Don't Know
CT (N=117)	24.8%	61.5%	11.1%	-	2.6%
MA (N=103)	35.9%	56.3%	6.8%	-	1.0%
RI (N=82)	35.4%	58.5%	4.9%	-	1.2%
ME (N=103)	38.5%	54.4%	5.8%	1.0%	-
NH (N=173)	42.2%	49.1%	6.4%	-	2.3%
VT (N=108)	27.8%	60.2%	11.1%	-	.9%
Totals (N=686)	34.7%	56.0%	7.7%	.1%	1.5%

QUALITY OF HIGHER EDUCATION IN YOUR OWN STATE



Question: What is your personal impression of the overall quality of a college or university education in your own state?

NEBHE 1984 Survey of New England Legislators (N=676): TABLE 30

NEBHE 1984 Survey of New England Legislators

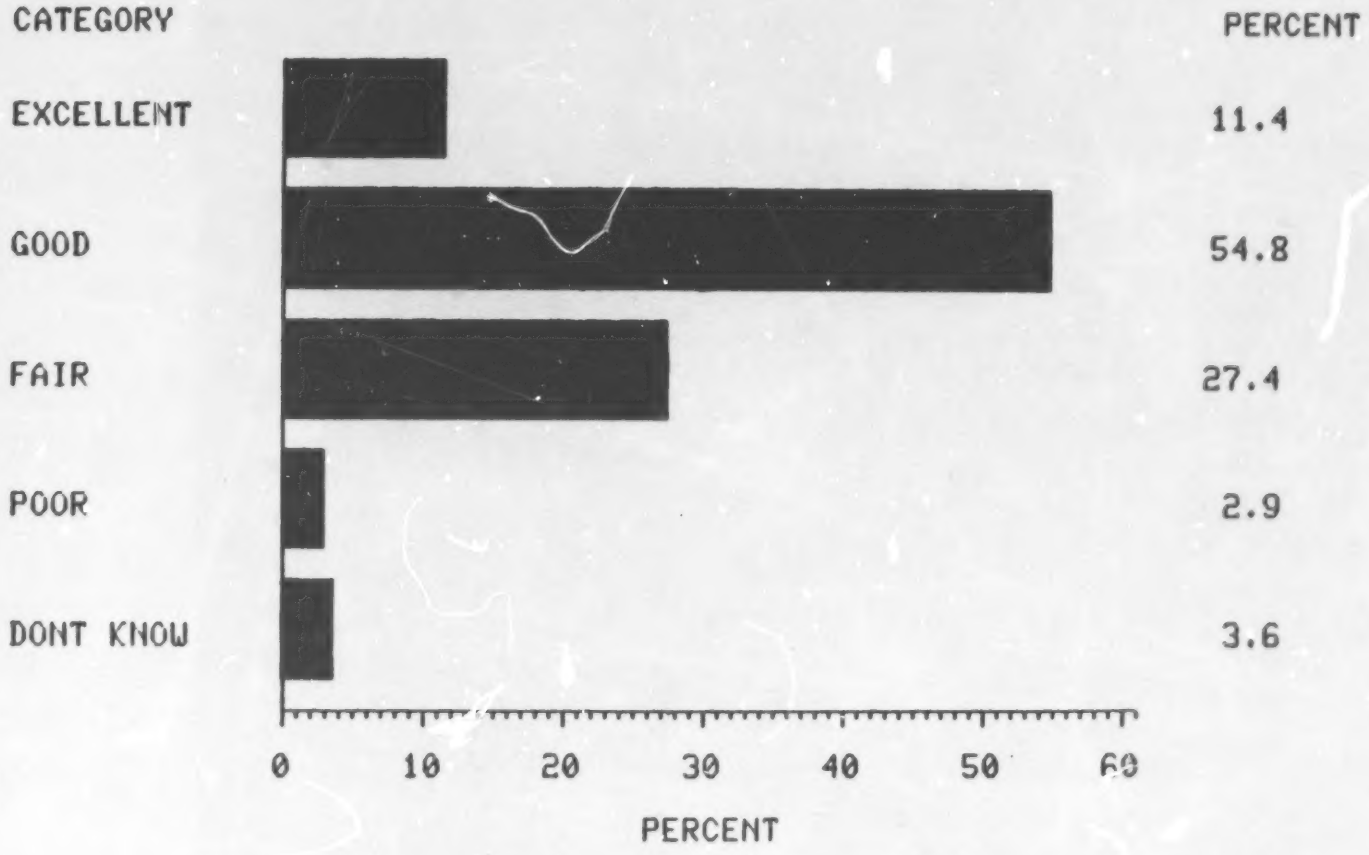
Table 3C

Quality of Higher Education in Your Own State

Question: What is your personal impression of the overall quality of a college or university education in your own state?

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Don't Know
CT (N=115)	23.5%	60.9%	13.0%	.9%	1.7%
MA (N=102)	60.8%	36.3%	2.9%	-	-
RI (N=79)	27.8%	54.4%	16.5%	-	1.3%
ME (N=101)	16.8%	63.4%	19.8%	-	-
NH (N=171)	22.2%	56.7%	18.7%	1.2%	1.2%
VT (N=108)	21.3%	65.7%	12.0%	-	.9%
Totals (N=676)	28.0%	56.5%	14.2%	.4%	.9%

HIGHER EDUCATION MEETING LABOR FORCE NEEDS



Question: How would you rank New England's colleges and universities on helping to meet the labor-force needs of private industries in the region?

NEBHE 1984 Survey of New England Legislators (N=694): TABLE 4

NEBHE 1984 Survey of New England Legislators

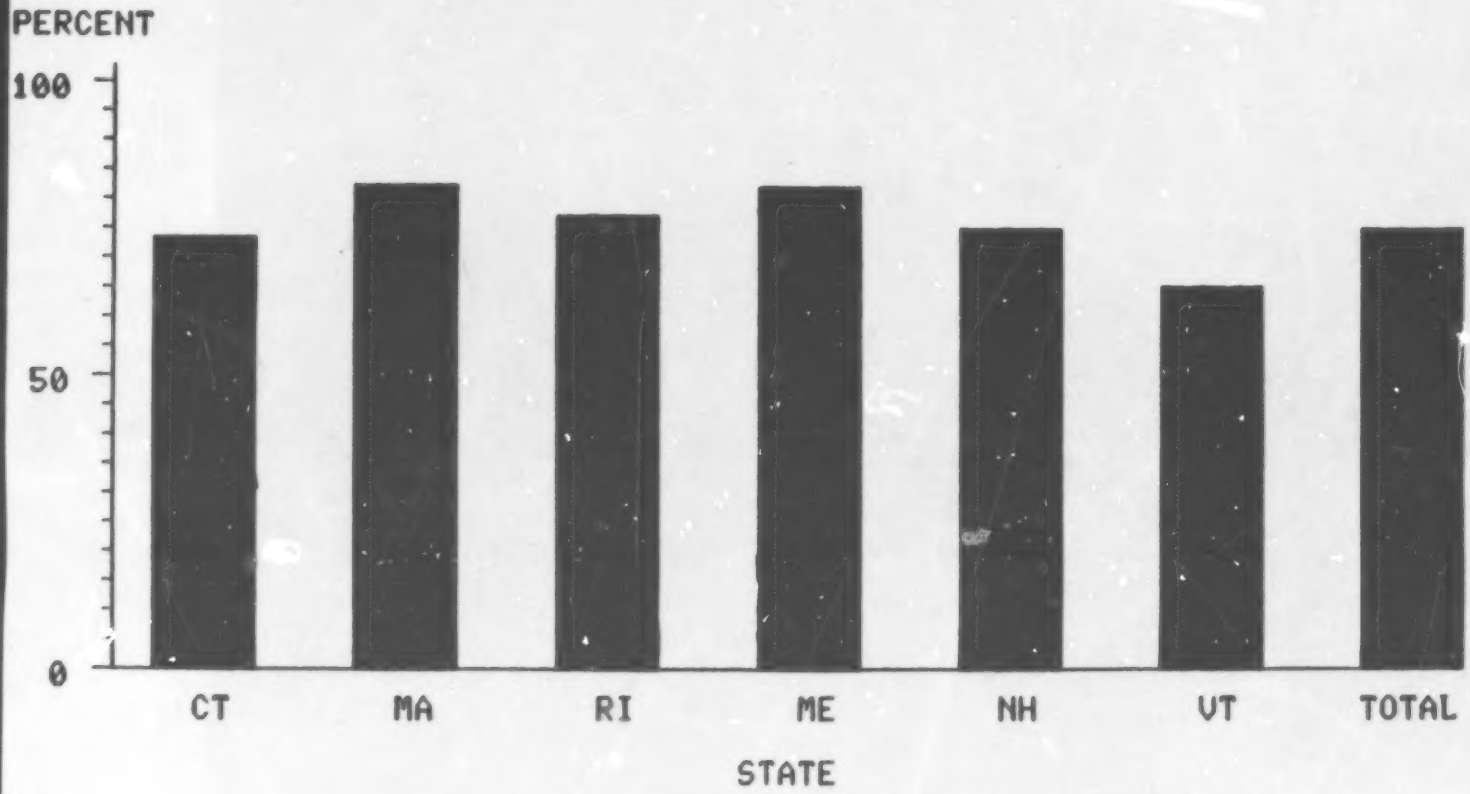
Table 4

Higher Education Meeting Labor Force Needs

Question: How would you rank New England's colleges and universities on helping to meet the labor-force needs of private industries in the region?

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Don't Know
CT (N=120)	7.5%	50.8%	35.0%	3.3%	3.3%
MA (N=101)	17.8%	67.3%	11.9%	1.0%	2.0%
RI (N=83)	12.0%	53.0%	28.9%	1.2%	4.9%
ME (N=104)	13.5%	48.1%	26.9%	7.7%	3.8%
NH (N=176)	10.8%	58.0%	25.6%	2.8%	2.8%
VT (N=110)	8.2%	50.0%	35.5%	.9%	5.5%
Totals (N=694)	11.4%	54.8%	27.4%	2.9%	3.6%

INCREASING FUNDING FOR HIGHER EDUCATION



Question: If someone suggested increasing state funding for colleges and universities, what would be your response to the suggestion? (Sum of percents for "strongly" and "somewhat" agree.)

NEBHE 1984 SURVEY OF NEW ENGLAND LEGISLATORS (N=684): TABLE 11

NEBHE 1984 Survey of New England Legislators

Table 11

Increasing Funding for Higher Education

Question: If someone suggested increasing state funding for colleges and universities, what would be your response to the suggestion?

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
CT (N=120)	28.3%	45.0%	15.0%	5.0%	6.7%
MA (N=100)	29.0%	53.0%	11.0%	4.0%	3.0%
RI (N=78)	34.6%	42.3%	15.4%	1.3%	6.4%
ME (N=104)	28.8%	52.9%	9.6%	2.9%	5.8%
NH (N=175)	44.6%	30.3%	13.1%	4.6%	7.4%
VT (N=664)	13.1%	52.3%	20.6%	7.5%	6.5%
Totals (N=684)	31.0%	44.4%	14.0%	4.4%	6.1%

News from

NEW ENGLAND BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

45 Temple Place, Boston, Massachusetts 02111 (617) 357-9620

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE Contact: Selby Holmberg

New England Legislators Reveal Overwhelming Support for Higher Education - Survey Shows

New England state legislators have revealed a positive attitude toward the region's colleges and universities - and a willingness to enact legislation to foster high technology development and academic research as well as to aid in funding retraining programs at institutions of higher education - according to a recent survey conducted by the New England Board of Higher Education (NEBHE) and the Caucus of New England State Legislatures.

More than 50 percent, an unusually high percentage, of New England's 1323 state legislators responded to the NEBHE survey, which sought to assess legislative attitudes toward higher education, the New England economy and the midcareer retraining of workers. The NEBHE survey was conducted with the support of the Fund for the Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE) and the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL). The Caucus of New England State Legislatures, a group composed of legislative leaders in the six New England states, co-sponsored the survey and encouraged the unusually strong response of lawmakers to it.

Legislators responding to the survey showed surprising unanimity in their opinion of higher education's contribution to the region's economy. Ninety percent

(More)

gave good or excellent ratings to the quality of New England's colleges and universities, while only 65 percent gave the same ratings to the quality of higher education in the U.S. generally.

John C. Hoy, NEBHE president, said of the general attitude revealed by the survey: "Legislative inquiry into the effectiveness of higher education in New England will be demanding, but farsighted; the focus of legislative attention is now on future quality, not past quantity."

Legislators seemed predisposed to have a high regard for higher education, since roughly two-thirds are college graduates, while one-third are not. But responses of college graduates were almost identical to those who were not, with two exceptions: legislators who had not graduated from college had a higher opinion of the quality of higher education than those who had college degrees, but were less inclined to increase funding for it.

Almost all legislators, 98 percent, indicated that they considered higher education to be important to the New England economy. Ninety-seven percent also agreed that there is an important need for the retraining of workers with obsolete skills. While 66 percent of legislators felt the region's higher education programs are presently helpful in training the young to meet New England's labor force needs, 85 percent placed special emphasis on the need for retraining programs for obsolete workers, a 20 percent increase over those responding to a similar NEBHE survey in 1980. Ninety-eight percent felt that it is important that institutions of higher education assist directly in providing retraining.

Support for legislation includes the enactment of state-level High Technology Morrill Acts involving matching grants designed to strengthen science, engineering and technology programs in the region's colleges and universities. Legislators also indicated strong support for tax incentives to encourage corporate contributions to

(More)

educational institutions; support for institutional exemptions from property taxes and, surprisingly, support for state reimbursements for part of revenues lost by local communities as a result of those exemptions. Further, legislators indicated support for a coordinated system of workforce retraining in New England.

In spite of considerable support for higher education by legislators, there were some complaints. Most legislators, 76.4 percent, indicated that there is inadequate communication between educators and government, and 89.2 percent believe academic institutions should supply legislators with better data with which they can judge higher education's effectiveness in using the tax revenues it receives.

Hoy, said of the overall legislative attitude revealed in the survey, "While very positive about the quality of New England colleges, legislators still want better hard evidence to support their own vision of higher education's importance to this state. The key question they appear to ask is: How do we know the region's students are learning what they need to know - that the public investment is paying off?"

Legislators revealed they were willing to use more than words to help higher education contribute to the growth of the New England economy. Eighty-seven percent of legislators responding to the survey indicated they would support a state-level High-Technology Morrill Act, providing assistance for joint initiatives between private industry, educational institutions and state governments.

Further, 91.5 percent of the region's legislators said they would support tax incentives to encourage corporate contributions of equipment, personnel and facilities for technology training at colleges and universities. Almost 90 percent also favored a coordinated system for labor retraining programs offered by the region's educational institutions.

Other revelations indicating strong general support for higher education included the fact that a strong majority of legislators (75 percent) favor

exempting colleges and universities from local property taxes, and more surprisingly, a majority (64 percent) also favor state reimbursements for at least part of the local revenue thus lost to municipalities.

A majority of legislators (54 percent) favor providing state scholarships to students attending private colleges and 57 percent also favor state support for scientific and technological research at private colleges and universities.

According to Hoy, legislative response to the NEBHE survey, particularly with regard to the retraining of the workforce, parallels recently published data showing that the populations of the southern three states are aging more rapidly and growing more slowly than that of the country as a whole.

"If New England's knowledge-based economic revival is to continue it will require substantial expansion of continuing education and retraining programs for mature members of the work force," Hoy says. "We cannot continue to expand the new technical and service industries with the hands and minds of the next generation alone. There simply will not be enough young people. In New England, mature workers require targeted opportunities for retraining and upgrading of their skill and competence. Legislative attitudes on this question are very encouraging."

These findings represent a sample of several themes to be released in a final report of the 1984 NEBHE Survey of New England Legislators. For more information and/or a copy of the complete report, enclose a check for $5.00 payable to the New England Board of Higher Education, 45 Temple Place, Boston, MA 02111.

NEBHE is a congressionally authorized regional, non-profit agency that seeks to encourage cooperation and efficient use of resources among colleges and universities in New England. Basic funding is provided by the region's six states and New England-based corporations.

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